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The Saturday Review of Literature

EDITED BY HENRY SEIDEL CANBY

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Prize Novels

IT was not Barnum who invented the prize novel; he missed that great opportunity. There have been great novels that won prizes, and large prizes that have gone to worthy novelists; there have been one or two excellent books with "Prize Winner" stamped on their slip covers published in the last year or two; but the business of prize giving has been commercialized, and it is becoming a menace both to good reading and good art.

The flat truth is that prize competitions as a rule call out very little good material. Practised novelists—and good novels usually come from practised novelists—are, with almost no exceptions, tied up by contracts for the publication of one, two, or three novels in advance. They cannot enter a competition unless it is conducted by their own publishing house, for it would be impossible for them to accept the terms of the usual competitive award which provides that So and So and Co., who give the prize, must publish the novel under the usual royalty agreement, and frequently with an option upon later novels attached. Hence a prize competition is not, under existing circumstances, a free field for merit, it is an opportunity for newcomers and the unattached. If, as is fondly supposed by the uninitiate, there were hundreds of masterpieces vainly seeking a publisher, this system would have its merits—and indeed in the fortunate (and rare) event of the discovery of a new name, it is abundantly justified. But in actuality the publisher's world is afloat with hundreds and thousands of novels of a most striking mediocrity, which drift in shoals toward every prize. And the actual competition is not among these thousands—which should never be published—but among the ten or a dozen which by solicitation, arrangement, or good luck, have been brought into the competition.

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If one of these is a fine novel, no one perhaps suffers—but if, as by the law of probabilities will increasingly happen as the number of such competitions increase, it is only a pretty good story, there is that same inflation of mediocrity, that same pushing of the commonplace, and that inevitable overemphasis which gives a bad distinction to so much American advertising. The prize novel must be exploited like a standardized cigarette. The more that is invested in a manuscript, the louder the book must be touted as the best. Prize novels must be thought great novels or someone will lose.

The second bald truth is that prize giving under existing circumstances has become just a new means of advertisement. The American reading public, larger and larger every year, and hence almost by necessity in the mass less and less discriminating, craves guidance among the thousands of published books. They can read reviews if they are critical as most are not; they can take advice if they wish to go to the trouble; they can read advertisements if they believe them. But the publisher can neither write reviews, nor give advice except by advertising. And to advertise for the hundreds of thousands of his possible public is an expensive business. Far more expensive than to paste a label on a book which reads in bright red letters "This novel took a $17,000 prize." If it won $17,000 it must be a good novel, says the public, and buys ten copies where it would have bought one or none. The temptation to the hard-pressed publisher has been irresistible. How shall he spend money on his proposed new book. So much on advertising, and sell, say, 10,000 copies; or twice as much on a prize, plus advertising, and sell 50,000? There is only one answer, unless his public wake up.

We do not attack prizes as such. We do not maintain that poor books have consistently been given great awards. Yet no one in his senses could maintain that more than one or two of the ten last American novels that have won prizes in the kind of competitions described, could by any possibility be listed among the ten best American novels of the period. Hence—caveat emptor!

The Hour of Moths

By ROBERT P. TRISTRAM COFFIN

THE little moths with eyes like pearls
Gaze at me through my pane.
This holy night so full of wings
Will not be mine again.

The earth is turning towards the dawn,
The stars go ever west,
An early bird still half in sleep
Twitters on the nest.

So few the moments left to be
Alone with silent mirth,
A sole and single candle flame,
Peace, and the turning earth.

So still it is that one could think
His body were a tree
Or lacework of a moth's white wing
Whose every rib can see.

Or any lovely thing whose skin
Drinks the holy night
And knows its beauty by a sense
More delicate than sight.

The trees in worship fill the world
With prayers benign and wise,
On all the altars of the night
Burn the moths' cool eyes.

This Week

"Voices of the Stones."
Reviewed by *Herbert Gorman.*
"The Foreshore of England."
Reviewed by *Capt. David Bone.*
"The Catholic Spirit in America."
Reviewed by *Theodore Maynard.*
"Splendor."
Reviewed by *Allan Nevins.*
"The Old Dark House."
Reviewed by *Henry S. Canby.*
Mr. Moon's Notebook.
By *William Rose Benét.*
"Strange Interlude" and "Marco Millions."
Reviewed by *Oliver M. Sayler.*
Mlle. de Sombreuil II.
By *Christopher Morley.*

Next Week, or Later

Disraeli.
By *Osbert Sitwell.*

Hardy at Max Gate

By H. M. TOMLINSON

IT was January 12, 1928, and a winter sunrise that gave our empty suburban street an unrecognizable look of splendor. I think the chimneys of our houses were of gold, and the walls and roofs of jasper and amethyst, which is nothing like them. That glowing and unfamiliar vista was as if I had surprised a secret celebration of the earth and sky; we were not supposed to see it; it was to fade into our own place before we were about. As I looked out on my changed street I was repeating the haunting thought of the night: "Hardy is dead." But the knowledge that our own light had gone out accorded with the colors of that high dawn. Naturally we associate a thought of Hardy with the aspect of the earth and sky. The heavens and the earth were always the chief characters in the dramas of that poet; over mere mortals presided the eternal sky and the shadowy presence of the earth. So it seemed right for the street to be empty, and to be strange with a transfiguring glow. Hardy had gone.

Within an hour, as the sunrise foretold, came the wind and rain. Roofs and sky turned to lead. The spurts of rain thickened the glass of the windows. There was going to be plenty of time indoors to think about Hardy, yet to think to little purpose; not really to think, but to stare unseeing at the sullen clouds and the rain; for beyond them was a dream country more vivid and stable than the elements, a visionary land in which one had moved imaginatively in the reading of nearly forty years, and had watched there the tragic drama of men and women who were more significant than one's neighbors; and to remember the venerable little man, whose magic had conjured that sublimation of the real and changing world, as we saw him at Max Gate on the day before his fatal illness began, sitting with the flames of a log-fire reflecting in his quick eyes while he talked blithely of poetry, speculated on the prehistoric earthworks to be seen from his house, and smiled at the gossip of the town.

But though there was all day to think about him there was no likelihood of making a contribution to wisdom, no chance of a critical adjustment which would help to place the poet's urn with precision. We cannot be dispassionate now. We cannot stand apart from our personal feelings, and so we cannot be critics; for in criticism, as we know, we ought to do what no one has ever done, and consider the work of a poet apart from mutable human opinions, and simply as an isolated and bereaved work of art. Luckily for Hardy's contemporaries they are not called upon to be critics who will be strictly just to him by all the fundamental laws of art which somehow include at our desire any curious deviation from precedent. It is not for us to attempt impartial justice, but only to exalt him, or otherwise—explain his sublimity, or his want of taste—as the moods take us, and this or that is consonant or not with the way we ourselves would have handled the matter; though certainly, as to one characteristic of the poet, most of us will agree. We cannot but mark, and with profound surprise, Hardy's pervasive sorrow. We have to question that perplexity. How could so great a mind, in the face of our beneficent progress, look sadly upon the happiness of our state? But it is not our business now to prove the poet's life-long error by pointing to those late agreeable steps heavenward in the history of humanity which joyfully mock the pessimist.

Today we must have diverse views of Hardy, but

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it cannot be helped. Instinctively we shall attempt to separate—for we know what we want—the beauty of his work, which we desire, from the truth in it. Hardy cannot succeed where Jesus of Nazareth failed. That truth and beauty are mystically one need not concern those who prefer the simple method of separating what is comforting in a book from what is challenging and disturbing. We find it difficult to confess that a poet's thought may be beautiful in its contrast with the darkness of our perversity; for that would mean that beauty convicted us. It is not the province of poetry to do that. Poetry is an irrelevant solace at leisure, which is pleasant, as in wine, after the dustiness of a harsh and insistent world. Besides, its thoughts may be contrary to revealed religion, and a poet is not a prophet. We do not expect of him revelations. So it need not surprise us that one of our younger and brighter essayists—to whom good and evil are no longer difficulties, but are easily definable because his Church provides him with an infallible test—when his opinion was sought by a journalist on the news of the death of the poet, said of the author of "The Dynasts" that "he was a nice, courteous gentleman, rather simple minded." Which is quite right, as far as it goes, and shows less religious intolerance than describing Hardy as "the village atheist mourning over the village idiot;" though the testimonial is applicable to so many men, fortunately, that it seems hardly worth the time of a journalist to record virtues so usual.

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Then again, the London daily papers, by their various placards on the morning after Thomas Hardy's death, betrayed the fact that not every one of them was prepared on the instant to estimate the weight of the news. Some of them did not consider his passing to be more important than some other subjects of interest, subjects which I was compelled by surprise to note. One paper was anxious that we should "Read our new serial: 'Frail Wives'." Another asked: "Who will give Jix £100,000?" The contents bill of another famous London daily paper bore simply the cryptic numerals "1857428;" though whether those figures referred to a successful feat of circulation, or were indeed a cabalistic advertisement of a fatal conjunction of numbers which made inevitable the passing of a great man, it was impossible for a non-reader to guess. Yet another of our daily papers placarded an outburst entitled: "Ambassadors Cars." That may have been a special edition devoted to automobiles of luxury, but I cannot say, for I did not buy the paper. And later in the day one afternoon paper of the capital of the British Commonwealth, a paper once famous for its liberal outlook on the world, gave a bare half-column to the news that the greatest figure in European literature, who happened also to be English, had gone, apparently because its editorial staff was too astonished by Mrs. Snyder's New Lease of Life. There were other periodicals, however, which did make the appropriate comment, and whose estimates of the significance of the principal news of the day were serious; yet these little aberrations show us that the stress of the exciting nature of the living day, its fears, dog-fights, rumors, executions, crime, and market prices, tend to confuse our sense of the value of what is lovely and of good report. It is not easy to turn from the attraction of what takes our notice to the estimate of the worth of a creator of beauty. Beauty, if it be there, will last longer than the distractions about us, but that does not mean much to those who cannot see it. Said a London councillor once, in the peroration of his speech which demanded the destruction of London's finest bridge, "as for its beauty, I have never seen it." Yes, but he failed to see also that the very horses which plod over it daily are in the same cart with him.

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Some of us are old enough to remember the violence of the attacks on Hardy and his morality when his last novels appeared. And besides immorality, he made plain his vulgarity; his taste was liable to deplorable lapses. But though that reception of his later novels decided him against writing any more prose for us, yet when I met him first, and this was referred to, he was reluctant to look back at it, but presently, finding that I could recall the controversies in some detail, he did begin to gossip of that phase of his past, but in so low and tolerant a tone that you might have thought he never had any feeling about it. Once I began to move uneasily at his recital of the course of one outrageous attack, but Hardy's face did not lose its good-humor, nor his voice its gentleness. He was only talking of men in the abstract, and this was part of the evidence. I should doubt that Hardy was ever made angry, except by cruelty to the lowly and unimportant.

* * *

He was a great man, if a sign of that is simplicity and modesty so surprising that they might be innocence. It was a shock to talented visitors, to find, when they met him, that the man who wrote "The Woodlanders" and "The Return of the Native" seemed not so clever as they. A meeting with Hardy was comforting to self-esteem. He was venerable, he was indeed already a legend; his great epic which placed him next to Shakespeare was published over twenty years ago; yet it all seemed rather odd, for the little old man himself, as he entertained us, might have been the youngest and most innocent of us all. He appeared content to talk of the habits of owls, and of the signs of the weather, of local inns and crusted characters, and of hearing in Dorchester by wireless the dancers' feet when an orchestra was playing at a London festival. Trivial life interested him. Little things amused him. Little things, you could see, often had for him a significance which a clever listener failed to grasp. Hardy was a simple man. A meeting with Hardy made it possible to understand why those very clever men about Shakespeare left for us such scant testimony of the fellow who wrote "Macbeth." The poet who wrote the sonnets was a smiling and good-natured man, we must suppose, who was so simple there was little to say about him. He never made epigrams, he never quarreled, and he never got excited, even when the Armada was scattered. Now and then perhaps, he would drop an odd remark which made a listener stare, and wonder what he meant. There seemed nothing but queerness in it, until later the phrase was remembered, because of an awkward coincidence in life, and then it became explicable, in a new light. Mere chance, that thought. It was the experience which brought the light. Shakespeare had spoken more wisely than he knew.

Hardy, too, had so innocent a divination into people and their motives that sometimes when talking to him you felt this child was as old as humanity and knew all about us, but that he did not attach importance to his knowledge because he did not know he had it. Just by chance, in the drift of the talk, there would be a word by Hardy, not only wide of the mark but apparently not directed to it. Nothing seemed to have suggested it. Why did he say it? Going home, or some weeks later, his comment would come back, with that revealing light on it.

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Max Gate is a walled little island of trees on the road to Egdon Heath, just outside Dorchester. No house can be seen from the road. I fancy Hardy himself planted most of that screen of leaves. It suggests the hiding place of a recluse. There is an approach across the fields from the town, and in summer that was the way to go, with Came Hill lifting darkly beyond a sea of corn, and the isolated promontory sculptured by men long before the Romans landed, now called Maiden Castle, in the distance. The square tower of Dorchester Church and the chimneys of the town floated near on the tree-tops of a hollow; you felt sure you would find Hardy in that country, even though the footpath was uncertain. But it was evening in sharp winter weather when we were there last. The house then was only a lantern in a dim porch. A spray of cotoneaster had left the mass of shadow to get into the light of the lantern; it was the only sign of a wall.

Mrs. Hardy always knew how to keep out intrusions such as easterly winds. Her house was as warm and comforting that evening as a quiet heart. The old man, brisk and youthful, showed us where we should sit to get the benefit of the fire. There was a lazy smoke-colored Persian cat—appropriately, Cobweb—who stretched and yawned, and was an assurance of the ease and rightness of the time and place. It was certainly the fireside to get to the heart of a matter, though leisurely. If our talk gave out, then in the interval the reflections of the lively fire played on the face of the old poet, who contemplated the bright logs, his eyebrows raised, his legs stretched out, his hands between his knees. That seamed face lost sight of the visitors for a while, and its nervous interest in the gossip changed to the compassionate look of a man who had brooded for long on the world, but was not sure he had made out what it all meant, or could do it the good he desired for it.

It may be true that as a man thinks so is he, and that may be why Hardy's head was satisfying with expected beauty. Some who met him say that you would not have known Hardy for a poet. Perhaps that is because the younger poets frequent the town, and are so often seen and heard. We get to think that a poet should resemble the pattern of a poet. Hardy did not. He resembled in no particular any other poet you may have met. He might have been a retired solicitor of the country town, pursuing keenly in his leisure several hobbies, finding cheerful entertainment in the fact that his house was on the site of a patrician graveyard of the Romans, and that when gardening he sometimes turned up relics. He would describe the signs which hinted that men unknown had a grove to their god near his garden long before Caesar landed. He would startle you with the remark that Robert Louis Stevenson, when he saw him last, was sitting in your chair. He would admit, and it seemed strange for a man of his years, that he read poetry nowadays and very little prose, but that he enjoyed the styles of Sir Thomas Browne and Lamb, and preferred Sterne to Swift. It would not be odd, but quite in keeping, that a retired solicitor should have a shrewder knowledge of men and women than a fashionable novelist. His interests turned quickly with any change of the conversation. He would give you a rum story of a dog, and you had to admit it was stranger than your own anecdote; so very strange indeed that you fell silent, wondering what the clue to the mystery could be.

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Yet when Hardy was in repose his face was that of a seer. There was no doubt then, no need to wonder what special privilege had admitted him to so intimate a knowledge of his fellows. That little man, with wisps of faded sandy hair on the back of the collar of his tweed jacket, blue-eyed, with a masterful nose that turned slightly from the straight, whose raised and questioning eyebrows pushed furrows up his forehead to his bald and globular cranium, had with his life-work taken the place in English literature next to Shakespeare; and it was always easy for me to feel that there was the very man. What those people were told who asked for signs and wonders we know. There the wonder was. There sat the author of "The Dynasts." He looked like it. And here, while we are at Max Gate, is where we should acknowledge the debt we owe to Mrs. Hardy, for she ordained that he should be with us longer than his frailty otherwise would have allowed.

While Hardy was with us he lent dignity to our day. His presence honored the temple of Athene. He was English; but because he was the embodiment of qualities which were essentially of the tradition, and because he belonged to the land as much as the heath and hawthorns of Egdon, and the dateless barrows on the hill tops about his home, and the stones of his village church, he represented us in a way that Parliament cannot, and so he belongs to those in every country who judge their neighbors by the best their neighbors have done. There is more of the salt of English life in the talk of the characters who move in Hardy's novels, and more of the English land in his scenes, than in all Hansard, and in all the controversies and guide-books. If strangers wish to know us let them read Hardy; but then, they will see only themselves in his poems and stories. Hodge over his beer in a Dorset inn, even when his drink has been doctored by politicians and the press, sometimes drops a word which is more convincing than the upshot of a Parliamentary debate. It is not recorded, except in Hardy; and yet perhaps it may be the last word on the subject, though it may take a century for it to be repeated with sufficient emphasis. Such words are like the flints in the soil; they belong to it, and are sure to show when the earth is moved.

Hardy himself never understood—or so it seemed to me, and in any case I suppose so simple a man would not find it easy to believe it—that the people of his tales and the scenes in which they move are part of the unconscious life of the present English world; that the light from the country of his dreams falls across reality, and makes significant and so more easily endurable its garishness. We have forgotten Hardy as a great writer; he is already

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part of traditional landscape. We are to believe, on the best authority, that we betray our provincialism if, when speaking of novels and novelists, we permit the mention of the best of the English writers until after a long list of Russians have been named. There is, says the voice of authority, a virtue called characterization, and the Russian novels have it, but the English in but an inferior way. Very well. Yet suddenly we remember there is more characterization in the last popular novel by a candid young lady than in all Greek drama. Where are we now? There is more characterization in Proust than in all Shakespeare. So what of it? Modern novels are full of characterization, good and bad, but good and bad together they all soon die. There is a chance, as "Macbeth" still lives on, that we may be mistaken in supposing that characterization is as important as we have been told. We may as well be called provincial as anything else if we decline to displace the author of the Wessex tales. For it may still be true that the earth and the sky and the force we call life transcend in their mystery any character, however heroic or pitiable. The earth itself is the oldest of characters; it was here when the earliest of us arrived. What word was given to it? We cannot learn that; but if you read again the first chapter of "The Return of the Native," or watch at night with Gabriel Oak on the summit of Norcombe Hill, with its "ancient and decaying plantation of beeches," while he revives a new-born lamb by a fire in his hut and looks to the stars to see where the earth has got to in the heavens, then the shadow of Something which is greater than mortal life begins to fall upon your reading. There is an undertone to Hardy's great passages which is like the murmur of an unseen ocean. We have a conviction of continuity then, though the stars are passing Norcombe Hill, which is, perhaps, only an illusion. But we need not trouble to prove our conviction. A poet has evoked beauty, which cannot be proved. Yet it is there, even if it is undescribable. For a bare instant we feel the riddle can be solved. A light from nowhere transfigured, for a moment, our gray and accustomed levels, and though the light is withdrawn its revelation is remembered.

An Irish Mystic

VOICES OF THE STONES. By A. E. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1927.

Reviewed by HERBERT GORMAN

A. E. BELONGS to that older Irish group that is disassociated from such men as James Joyce, Brinsley Macnamara, and Forrest Reid. The difference is mainly one of literary approach if we ignore the obvious fact that the older man writes both poetry and prose, while the second group confines itself entirely to prose. The very fact that A. E. feels the constant necessity of self-expression in sheer poetical forms is a pertinent clue to the deep-seated differences between him and the younger prosateurs. For him life is still to be approximated and touched in sublimated forms. He is a mystic venturing upon the secrecies of the soul with symbols and faint rhythms and subtle words. Standing apart, as he does, from those younger men who are, first of all, analysts and dissectors of consciousness and subconsciousness, he may be affirmed as a traveler of the superconscious. A. E., of course, is a patent mystic, and "Voices of the Stones" offers again that lovely and aloof pilgrimage through the high twilight world of symbols, nuances, and overtones. In his "boat of soul" he once more travels by magic mountains whereon the gods walk, speaking softly to one another.

"Voices of the Stones" is a small book, yet in it A. E. has packed illimitable suggestiveness. With delicate rhythms and other worldly imagery he pictures states of the soul and flings across his world the impalpable mantle of his mystic thought. In the lamentable night that surrounds the soul he dreams on the ancient gods and a worthier existence and he grasps at the humble stones that have still retained "their morning star of purity immutable."

The desire to enlarge on A. E.'s genius (for manifest genius it is) is importunate but the difficulties of comment render it almost impossible in a few paragraphs. What is one to say about this high mysticism that constantly touches life with its pale wizard wand and translates it into strange glooms and glows? The celestial presences are always about him and although he may swear that he is no more than a brother to the stones he is eternally conscious of a world to which this earth is no more than a shadow. He feels the urge in the mountain wind.

The cold limbs of the air
Brush by me on the hill,
Climb to the utmost crag,
Leap out, then all is still.

Ah, but what high intent
In the cold will of wind;
What sceptre would it grasp
To leave these dreams behind!

Trail of celestial things:
White centaurs, winged in flight,
Through the fired heart sweep on,
A hurricane of light.

I have no plumes for air:
Earth hugs it to my bones.
Leave me, O sky-born powers,
Brother to grass and stones.

GEORGE RUSSELL (A. E.)
From "Twenty-four Portraits," by William Rothenstein, (Harcourt, Brace).

Idle Tonnage

THE FORESHORE OF ENGLAND, or Under the Red Ensign. By H. M. TOMLINSON. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1927.

Reviewed by CAPTAIN DAVID W. BONE

IT is of the flag of Britain's Mercantile Sea Service that Mr. Tomlinson writes; in particular, of shipping moods and movements during the industrial depression of 1925. A sober theme enough and one calling for vision and insight on the part of the author else the reader could draw no more from it than from a Governmental Blue Book.

Mr. Tomlinson visited the seaports of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in the winter of 1925 to gain first hand impressions of the state of shipping affairs. "The Foreshore of England" embodies his conclusions. The book is, necessarily, planned upon the lines of journalism, and if ever proof were needed that the gap between journalism and imaginative literary work is small and negotiable, it lies between these covers. Very few writers, however, could invest the stark and sober details of such a survey with the dignity and glamour that Mr. Tomlinson imparts. Quite long ago I read, in some newspaper, an epic of the sea: the story of seamen's efforts to bring their ship to port against all that the twin demons of fire and tempest could resolve. Tomlinson wrote it as later I learned. Then came "The Sea and the Jungle," with which there is little comparable save Conrad at his best. This author's literary history since then is well known: "Gallions Reach" establishes him in a position that few writers could attain.

Much of Mr. Tomlinson's writing has been of sea life, and it is therefore an appropriate circumstance that he should come to survey the ships and the seamen (that he so obviously regards with affection) during the time of their travail, when sailormen were tramping the dockside streets in need of employ, when fine ships lay idle for want of cargo, when shipwright and engine-fitter stared blankly at the closed work-gates of the shipyards, the cunning of their handwork diminishing day by day for want of grip upon their familiar tools.

What, in other hands, would be but a gloomy recital of plants of industrial stagnation in the seaports, is by him rendered strangely arresting. His facts and figures can be read in objective description of dockside street and palatial shipping offices, of poverty and squalor in Welsh mining villages and "vanity bags" behind the plate glass windows of Queen Street in Cardiff.

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And Mr. Tomlinson admits the weakness of even personal investigation into the distress that, in 1925, reached inland—well beyond the docks and the seaports. "You may get any opinion you desire by choosing your man," he writes: and those questioned by this author were rarely other than the manual workers, the sufferers—as always—in any industrial depression. It is perhaps, on this account, understandable that he casts doubt upon the opinions of the shipowners, but, even in the expression of his dubiety, the artistry of the writer is evident. He weaves a warp of far voyaging into the prosaic pattern of a slump in freights. Writing of Liverpool and the Mersey shipowners:

> Their city, however, does not itself reflect their misfortunes. The business premises of those magnates by the Mersey would make the stately pleasure-dome which Kubla Khan decreed by the river Alph seem a mere bungalow after all. It is not easy to suppose that these offices and warehouses register but progressive failure. Indeed the Mersey with its towers and shipping is so impetuous and tonic in its effect upon a visitor that he is fairly sure that important shipowners, who would persuade us to prepare for the towing to her last resting-place of a stately liner now past her day, and in the melancholy splendor of a nation-wide sunset, would look comic if their dark bark turned out after all to be the latest Cunarder on the morning tide.

Such writing comes as a glint of sunlight upon a dark horizon, and it is of sombre sea lines that Mr. Tomlinson writes in this book. Throughout his lengthy tour he found the shipping industry in a very bad way. The sudden volcanic boom that followed upon the close of the great war had subsided in dust and ashes. The ashes fell heavily upon the seamen and the workers, but some of the dust—or so Mr. Tomlinson maintains—was gold dust for the whilom owners who sold out at the peak of the boom.

> . . . They were halcyon days. Shipowners who had bought their ships at the bottom of the market, who reaped all the advantage of the years of the fabulous freight rates, then in 1920, floated companies, made themselves directors at fixed fees, and bought their ships from themselves, on the higher scale, with the money the public had provided. It looks, on the face of it, like anarchy. It seems, in a real sense, treachery to the men who perished. But no: it was, of course, the outcome of sound economic laws, to question which would be Bolshevism. We should like to question them, though we dare not. We should like to know what these sound laws have done with the money since then. Where is it? Is it like the lovely golden clouds of Hans Breitmann's party? All we know for certain about it is that it numbs, like a dead hand, the efforts to revive trade and to make our ships pay in their competition with increasing foreign tonnage. It checks shipbuilding and depresses the standard of living for seamen and shipwrights. It is largely the cause of the gloomy views of our future we see so frequently reported.

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In his mood (always his mood) of intense sympathy with the manual worker, Mr. Tomlinson is somewhat heated in his attitude toward the shipping employer. He makes no mention of the National Maritime Board, a "Board" that has been instrumental in maintaining seamen's wages and service conditions at a level with which few industrial occupations ashore could compare. One is not convinced that the industry suffers in more than a temporary and casual degree from the action of certain shipowners who sold out at the height of the boom in 1919-20 and retired to country estates to batten upon War Loan Fives. Investments at that rate of interest would have little appeal to them. The melting pot of an industry with which they have small acquaintance, but great hopes of aggrandizement, has probably absorbed a portion of their gains. In turn, the cinematograph men (let us say) may look to shipping to retrieve a loss. Sea transport is a vital necessity.

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American Catholicism

THE CATHOLIC SPIRIT IN AMERICA. By GEORGE N. SHUSTER. New York: Lincoln MacVeagh, The Dial Press. 1927. $3.

Reviewed by THEODORE MAYNARD

THE present animated discussion of Catholicism in America unfortunately rises not (as a rule) from an interest in the theological system, the philosophy, or the artistic creative power of Christendom, but from a widespread concern about the hypothetical connection of the Church with secular politics. The possible nomination of Governor Smith as the Democratic candidate for the Presidency has brought the matter to the boiling-point. Mr. Shuster's book is, therefore, exceedingly timely; and we may be grateful to him for lifting his level of argument above the politics of the day, and for dealing with it in the general light of Catholic culture.

The phrase "Catholic culture" is likely to strike the vast majority of Protestant Americans as odd. And it is perfectly true that what is generally recognized as culture is not, as a rule, conspicuous in such members of the Church as the average American meets. He thinks of it with some excuse in terms of "wops" and "harps"—firemen, policemen, bootleggers, and ward-politicians; for, unless he is very intelligent, highly educated, and widely-travelled, he has no means of escaping from his own provincialism. There has never been in the United States—except in isolated spots—an example of Catholic culture permeating all departments of life. There has been, and there is, on the contrary a strong Protestant tradition, which never shows itself more strongly than in the instances of such intellectuals as attempt to escape from it. The American is never able to look up, as did William Cobbett, at the front of a cathedral created under the intense inspiration of medieval Catholic genius, and to exclaim, "The men who built that were not benighted!" Indeed, should the American Protestant happen to wander into a Catholic church in this country, he will find (unless he is exceptionally lucky) gim-crack architecture, Barclay Street statuary, and maudlin music.

But all these things are likely to give him a false impression. Even in the matter of ecclesiastical music enormous strides are being made, and the children now being trained in plain-chant according to the Justine Ward method are destined to effect a revolution in the next generation. The revival of plain-chant is only one indication out of many that American Catholics are about to enter into their full cultural inheritance.

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Yet they still lamentably lag behind their co-religionists in other countries. In England, for example, there are less than two million Catholics: in America there are twenty millions. But in England, despite the terrific handicap of an established Protestant church, Catholics maintain themselves, without any apology, in every sphere of intellectual and social life. Indeed, I think it could easily be shown that they have an influence, in every department of life they touch, immeasurably preponderant to their numbers.

How is it then that American Catholics effect, by comparison, so little? My explanation, given after ten years spent in various parts of the United States, is that they suffer—almost as much as do the Jews—from an inferiority complex. They are touchy; they start at the slightest sign of a threat; they are even afraid of the Ku Klux Klan. A few of them are actually Prohibitionists. Though the Volstead Act is demonstrably opposed to Catholic principles, they hesitate to oppose it lest they should be thought "un-American" by the Baptists of Kansas and the Methodists of Iowa. It can be nothing but timidity, plus the insidious working of a Puritan atmosphere, that has impelled such a man as Colonel Callahan of Louisville, Kentucky, to join dry leagues and to have sat at Bryan's side at the Dayton trial.

Yet in no country in the world is Catholicism in a more fortunate position than it holds here. In America there are a hundred amorphous sects into which the sharp sword of Catholic logic, properly directed, could cut as into butter. And in America there is the positive constitutional guarantee of religious freedom. Though the Church is indifferent to forms of government, and will, under necessity, adapt itself even to extreme autocracy, there has never been a political system which so perfectly accords with her nature as does that of the United States. A fact which makes the apprehensions of the Klan absurd.

Mr. Shuster's book offers a thoughtful, if hardly a brilliant, survey of the problems confronting Catholicism in America. He offers many valuable suggestions—particularly that the current anti-Catholic bigotry is as much social as religious. It is rather ungenerous and obtuse of him, however, to go out of his way to attack Mr. Mencken. For though I am not a devotee at the shrine of St. Henry of Baltimore—whose limitations I recognize at least as clearly as does Mr. Shuster—Catholics ought to be able to see that he is the most redoubtable ally the Church has in this country.

Mr. Shuster has, nevertheless done a useful piece of work. It is a pity that his book shows too frequently laboriousness and a certain incoherence, due to the fact that it seems to have been largely patched together from *Commonweal* editorials.

The Splendid Commonplace

SPLENDOR. By BEN AMES WILLIAMS. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1927. $2.50.

Reviewed by ALLAN NEVINS

MR. WILLIAMS'S title, which at first seems dissociated from his novel, really points its meaning. The book is a detailed recital of the life of an average American—at any rate, an American who is of mere average intellect and energy, though morally he is something better; a good citizen, an exemplary husband and father, an honest, uninspired, plodding worker. He happens to be a mediocre cog in the newspaper machinery of Boston. He might equally well have been an ineffectual bookkeeper in Denver or civil servant in Pittsburgh. Whereas most novels find their significance in the unusual, and make splendor the attribute of the distinctive man or deed, Mr. Williams finds splendor in the sense of duty, the unselfishness, the instinctive loyalty of his commonplace hero and the equally commonplace wife; he finds splendor in their petty joys and achievements, and their resignation under numerous woes and humiliations. He finds a certain splendor also in the panorama of American life from 1880 to 1920, which these people watch passively and incuriously, but which forms definitely a part of the novel.

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The honesty of Mr. Williams's novel, an honesty which informs every paragraph and line as well as the whole main conception, gives it its chief distinction. In his power of observing the commonplace and recording it interestingly the author is simply a lesser Howells, but in his thoroughgoing honesty he yields precedence to nobody. His hero, Henry Beeker, grows up in a blacksmith shop in the West End of Boston, gets a modicum of schooling, and from office-boy in a newspaper shop slips into a reportership. His whole life is spent with the *Tribune*. He climbs to be copyreader and finally State House correspondent; and then, not choosing to satisfy his boss's grudge against legislators whom he knew to be honest, he is demoted. In the end we see him back where he had begun, in the reference room or "morgue," a place for boys and old men. But in the long interval he has married; he has reared children, put his son through Dartmouth, and seen his youngsters establish their own homes; he has supported his hardworking, maltreated sister, wife of a swindler, and his failure of a father-in-law. He has had pathetic frustrate dreams of something better—of publishing a novel about Africa. He is not a failure; he is certainly not a success. He has had a shabby, commonplace, dutiful, healthy life—and as Mr. Williams suggests, there is a glint of splendor about it.

Mr. Williams possesses a sensitive perception, and sometimes, as when he pictures the breakdown of the abused sister under her troubles, his narrative is poignant. He makes a deftly changing background of the social and political flow: the first streetcars, "Wang," the Chicago World's Fair, bicycles, the Cuban War, automobiles, the trust problem, Curtis Guild as Governor, and all the rest. His style lacks beauty, and he often seems uninspired; but he has produced a solid study of the ordinary, normal individuals and families upon whom our social stability depends, followed through the changes of decades, and treated it all with a reverence which the commonplace rarely receives.

A Bit of Swedish Comedy

CHARLOTTE LŒWENSKŒLD. By SELMA LAGERLÖF. Translated from the Swedish by VELMA SWANSTON HOWARD. New York: Doubleday, Page & Company. 1927. $2.50.

MISS LAGERLŒF'S latest novel, the first in several years, is distinctly one of her lighter productions. It is, in fact, a Swedish comedy of errors. The various misunderstandings and conflicts which furnish its tragi-comedy would be blown away like fog before a wind if the principal characters only faced them at critical junctures with common sense; but as they resolutely refuse to comprehend each other, the tangles become more intricate until they have to be cut, not untied. When the heartache and irritation are greatest, the reader is expected to be most amused. For once Miss Lagerlöf is not intent upon hiding serious purpose in imaginative and poetical form; she is intent simply upon being gaily entertaining.

Yet this gay trifle, for such it is, has its deeper aspects. One character, the heroine, is worthy of Jane Austen; and indeed the whole book, with its restricted and highly conventional social scene, its petty but intense drama, and its careful miniature-painting of half a dozen people, reminds us not a little of the Englishwoman's novels. The main difference is that it is a little more fantastic and high-spirited, a little less serious. It presents the tight little world of Swedish provincial society of the present day, or a generation ago at most; a world prim, religious, respectful of wealth and social rank, and given a quaint charm by its ingrained folk-customs and its rural modes of thought. Normal, quiet people get along very well in such a world. But one unconventional or abnormal person throws its accustomed movements entirely out of gear; it becomes filled with confusion, and its inhabitants are shocked to find everything topsy-turvy. Miss Lagerlöf has introduced both the unconventionality and abnormality; she has made an unconventional tomboy of a girl and an abnormal young religious fanatic fall in love with each other.

The whole countryside surrounding Korskyra Deanery become participants in the quarrels, misunderstandings, partial reconciliations, and final rupture between Charlotte and the curate. A curate is a piece of neighborhood property, and the humblest parishoner claims a right to know why he becomes engaged, breaks his engagement, tries to marry a peddler-girl, and behaves generally like a lunatic. Its gossips claim the right to misconstrue and criticize every action of Charlotte from the moment she breaks with Arthur to the hour of her angry marriage with a rich foundry-master. Throughout the book the curate is preposterously perverse and unreasonable; Charlotte is preposterously chivalrous in her desire to take on her own shoulders every ounce of public blame; and the foundry-master, with all his strength and sense, has a way of putting his foot in at precisely the wrong time and place The result is a crazy jumble of incidents, a succession of riotous exits and entrances, with the sewing-circle of the neighborhood serving as chorus, and the calm shrewdness of the dean and his wife elucidating the motive of the young people and furnishing a little rational guidance. The end cannot be called satisfactory; Charlotte's marriage is safe but highly unrapturous. Still, it is as good an end as the tangled *contretemps* of the story permit, or as life itself often permits. Miss Lagerlöf has written a diverting if comparatively unimportant tale, revealing herself and her Swedish people in an unwontedly gay and capricious light.

The Saturday Review
of LITERATURE

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An Engrossing Tale

THE OLD DARK HOUSE. By J. B. PRIESTLEY. New York: Harper & Bros. 1927.

Reviewed by HENRY SEIDEL CANBY

THIS is a good book, which is not surprising, for Mr. Priestley is an English critic and essayist of competence and real distinction. It is also an interesting, indeed an engrossing, story, which is more surprising for critics usually do not make good story tellers. And it is a book with qualities which should recommend it to a circle of readers far wider than a critic as critic could ever hope to reach.

For "The Old Dark House" is that combination of mystery story and character novel which we are always hoping to find, and so seldom do find excellently written, as this is, well-conceived, and carried through its climax to a fitting end. The Brontës could write such curious books, and in this story of wayfarers caught by swirling floods and tempests in a house full of folks mad, or once mad, there is some of the dark tempestuousness and some of the hard clear vision of Emily Brontë, who, like Mr. Priestley, was bred on the Yorkshire moors.

It is just a young couple, fine, sensitive, admiring, yet at the point in marriage when inexorable divisions, petty but tangible, begin to warp two minds apart. They are driving with a guest through a tornado by night in the Welsh hills—and come to the house. Then the flood maroons them with another couple, casually related for the week-end, and upon all of these, the house and its people, the storm begins to work a spell. There are confessions, there is danger, there are love making and love fulfilment, there are horror, conflict, humor, and sudden death.

Well, you can write of a hundred mystery stories in this way, and justly convey an interesting story, but no more. There is more here. The scene, the night, the house, the burnt-out family, rotting in this pocket of the hills, the inner despairs, luminous hopes, magnetisms, bright flashes of life from a hard modern world—all these, if you please, are but the symbols of experience through which the severed couple must go to be reunited. I do not know. It would seem so, for this fine story comes to rest in tranquillity and confidence at the end. But not until, after the manner of Arnold Bennett, it has set types of the London world revealing themselves, not until it has solved a mystery, and run through an exciting plot.

If you can tell a story—and Mr. Priestley can—it is a great advantage to be an essayist, to be *fine*, to be reflective, to have an eye for the comic spirit, an ear for the grotesque, a taste for the subtleties which lie behind action. And it is a great thing to have that sense of the unity of experience which minor story tellers so notably lack, to be able to build storm and haunting mystery and personality and incident into a whole like a fine play adequately staged. This is the achievement of "The Old Dark House." Take it any way—as a "thriller," as a character study, as a *tour de force* of style and setting—it is good.

A complete and textually accurate edition of the writings of Landor is about to be issued by Chapman & Hall of London. The need for such an edition requires no demonstration to students of Landor. The general reader, however, may be reminded that the authorized "Works" of 1876, edited by Forster, omitted no less than ten "Imaginary Conversations," ignored a great mass of miscellaneous prose, and in respect of a single volume of Landor's verse left out 195 pieces. A more scholarly edition issued from 1891 onwards omitted three "Imaginary Conversations," passed over much miscellaneous prose, and excluded some even of the verse given by Forster. The present edition will include every extant work by Landor. It will give readers for the first time the entire body of the "Imaginary Conversations;" it will reprint the "Commentary on Trotter's Memoir of Mr. Fox," the claims of which were justly and vainly pressed on Forster by Lord Houghton; it will, for the first time, reprint the whole of "High and Low Life in Italy;" it will reprint the hitherto neglected, and often important, letters which Landor wrote to the Press on a great variety of subjects; and besides including much other neglected or carelessly edited matter, it will find a place for the whole of his verse. So far as can be at present foreseen, the edition will occupy sixteen volumes in all. It is sold in sets only, and is limited to 525 sets, of which 500 will be for sale in England and America.

Mr. Moon's Notebook

February 1, 1928. *The Last Minute Men.*

HAVE you a little clock inside you? Oh, indeed! Who are you, then—Captain Hook's crocodile? I myself, no more than averagely a crocodile, go around exasperatingly ticking to my own perpetual discomfiture. There are always things to be done, things that ought to have been done long ago (that would have been so awfully easy to do days ago), that aren't done, that must be done, that most imperatively must be accomplished upon this very instant; and here you behold me, the eternal Last Minute Man, sprinting desperately along the treadmill of dilatory recollection in the vain endeavor (ever, forever!) to catch up with myself!

That old talk about the panorama of one's past life that occurs to the drowning—it isn't a circumstance to the the things that occur to you in the Last Minute. What a feverish activity seizes the brain! If you have ten blocks to go, being already twenty minutes late—if you have three columns to write, your copy being already an hour overdue at the printer's—if the dim doze of your happy-go-lucky existence is suddenly blown to multicolored bits by the remembrance of the important errand forgotten—my word, how the little, old bean does begin to hum! Meanwhile life around you becomes so nerve-rackingly deliberate and slow-motion-picture-like that the handkerchief stuffed in the mouth to prevent screaming seems almost a necessity. "*Lateagain, lateagain, lateagain,*" briskly whisks the little interior metronome. And the imagination whirls frantically with prayers for Seven League Boots, soaring airplanes, self-propelling pencils, wizards' wands and what-not. Were there a block the less or only fifteen minutes more, what miracles might not be accomplished! How much time there is in a minute, in ten minutes, what an infinity of things could be done in twenty minutes—when you are bounding along your Last Minute without another minute to spare!

There is an exhilaration, the exhilaration of desperation. One crowded minute of inglorious frenzy. Why live this way? Why develop the fine art of dawdling to such a point, at the expense ultimately of one's peace of mind, of one's screeching muscles, of one's gasping breath, almost of one's precariously seated reason? Are hours of puttering worth this final tension, this maniac lunge to accomplish the impossible, this stricken dive after the thing forgotten? Well, on the whole, yes—I think so.

There were golden idle hours; there will be golden hours again. In the meanwhile one struggles briefly in a vortex. And the essential earnestness of life is borne in upon one with a vengeance. Those who never forget, those who are never late, those who prepare their copy days ahead and always have the proofs neatly corrected and back at the printer's long before they need—what do they know of living!

The question is rhetorical, and the chances are that they know a good deal. But don't spoil my point! We dilatory ones must believe ourselves more familiar with the true zest of existence, being more closely acquainted with the bright eyes of danger. And the infinite self-pity that surges up in us upon recognition of our fantastic plights, how it enriches our personalities to ourselves! In what superb sable cloaks of tragedy we rush enwrapt, with what piteous daring we hurl ourselves forward with bared rapier against unnumbered foes! We are in the last ditch—or trying to scramble out of it; we are at the last stand with feet hobbled as in a nightmare dream. The reproach and the criticism that waits at the end is so enormously unfair (since in this Last Minute we have been making such superhuman efforts) that upon our tumbled and tousled locks descends from heaven the true martyr's crown. And never have we lived at such a pitch as in this instant. The world summons up infinite deviltry to delay us. Crowds jostle us, swarms of visitors immediately rush up in elevators and precipitate themselves upon us as gay bevies of callers, somebody catches us by the buttonhole and begins a long story, the typewriter jams, the ribbon ties itself into a knot, there is no copy paper, the crosstown traffic (a close succession of ten thousand lumbering trucks) begins the moment we reach the crossing on our way uptown, we trip over a blind man selling pencils, thunderstorms or snowstorms burst from the heavens, rain descends in torrents, a blizzard whirls blindingly, it wasn't 49th Street, it was 59th Street (or was it 56th Street?), the subway-express doors slam the moment we reach the foot of the stairs, we have nothing but a twenty-dollar bill at the elevated ticket window, the telephone rings a long commanding trill just at our elbow, two buttons fly off our overcoat, somebody has borrowed the book we had to review, the taxi moves two inches and then halts stolidly for half an hour—but you all know these things. Meanwhile the mind races out of control. "Oh God, oh God, oh God," is a continuous ejaculation interspersed with bits of "I want to *be* happy," "The Two Black Crows," "Halleluiah, *Halleluiah!*" "Then I sez to him (overheard)—but I sez right back to him—an' then I sez—," "There *is* a happy land—," "I'm terribly sorry, but, you see, it was a most *important* conference—," "But you can't have any idea of how hard I work!" and so on. There are all the old excuses hastily to be passed in review; there is the excessive strain on one's invention to invent spur-of-the-moment new ones. The Spur of the Moment! Ah, it is plunged, indeed, deeply into one's quivering flank! And there is a long queue of people reaching for one hundred yards between one and the ticket window!

Well, the efficient executive and the man with a memory know nothing of our fiend's tocsinclanging disaster. Little they reck of the nightmare-land through which haste apoplectically the phantoms of those always too late. They are unacquainted with our crags in the mind's Caucasus where remorse sinks its reeking beak in our liver and lights. Sweat never suddenly starts from their brows, doors never bang behind them, they never spring galvanically from their chairs, they never get jammed in steel lattices or wildly leap from the inexorably parting flanges of sidewalk elevator-covers on the trail of the bus just passing the corner. *They* never jibber! *They* never miss trains by a second's margin. At least, I don't suppose they do. These be *our* honorable spiritual scars. We are the more dashingly responsible citizens—for at least we are held equally responsible and hardly ever excused.

I happen to be writing this entry in my notebook at the Last Minute, and so I can speak feelingly. We late ones, we sometimes accomplish prodigies; at least, we get words on paper, weave intricately through masses of people in motion at incredible speeds, practice a ready and flexible invention in explanation and excuse that might make the fortune of many a writer. Mentally and physically we keep unusually fit because fate is forever upon our trail and we have to become agile in our dodges. Grudge us not, then, our hours of ease, our golden slumbers, our day-dreams so soon evanescent, so startlingly dispersed! True, while you are toiling upward through the night we are either at a late party or toping merely with Morpheus. When you are briskly tripping the pave at eight o'clock we are tiger-shooting in the vales of Kandahar (though only in a splendid dream). When we somnolently raise the shade and draw back the curtains, you have already dictated a dozen letters to a ruminant stenographer. While our feet are on our desk in our private office and our thoughts lost in ephemeral and highly-colored sentimental speculations, you are successfully talking turkey to a big prospect about an air-tight proposition. Everything about you is docketed, pigeonholed, to be found immediately in the files or to be on the other end of the wire in a split second. You go through wire baskets like rain through a screen. Your watch is always set by Western Union. But we are the darlings of romance and tragedy, we are the desperate defeated continually rising on those well-known stepping-stones of our dead selves, we are the sparrows of the gods that keep on climbing up that blooming spout, we are the Last Minute Men—and we who are just about to forget the most important engagement yet, to lose a princedom by five minutes, to be handed our final pay envelope on account of a certain destiny-directed omission—we salute you. At least I suppose we ought to salute you. If you want to be saluted. We live too close to the palpitating heart and soul of things to care whether you salute us or not. Leave us to our intermittent delirium and our gaudy dreams!

WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT.

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The Play of the Week

By Oliver M. Sayler

STRANGE INTERLUDE, A Play in Nine Acts. By Eugene O'Neill. Produced by the Theatre Guild at the John Golden Theatre, New York, January 30, 1928. Publication by Boni & Liveright, New York, impending.

MARCO MILLIONS, a Play in Prologue, Three Acts, and Epilogue. By Eugene O'Neill. Produced by the Theatre Guild at the Guild Theatre, New York, January 9, 1928. New York: Boni & Liveright. 1928. $2.50.

OUR foremost playright is still on experiment bent. Having convinced Broadway producers that he can write plays which appeal to their circumscribed mental outlook, he leaves them staring in amazed confusion at his serene refusal to continue doing so. Until the Theatre Guild volunteered to serve, we had the prospect of Eugene O'Neil without a producer—the outstanding contemporary contribution of America to the esthetic world without a laboratory, a home for the realization of his difficult and unconventional dreams. Without denying the probability that O'Neill would continue to write—laboratory or no laboratory, it is just possible that his sponsorship by the Guild has occurred at as crucial a moment in his artistic development as the ministry of the old Provincetown Players to his early one-act plays.

If I have a divided mind on O'Neill's experiments, I do not fail to recognize the necessity of a stage on which to give them trial. I can admit that need and still wish that he would linger with a new form, at least until he has perfected the union of form and substance, before he plunges on to fresh adventures.

* * *

The impulse of an artist like O'Neill, however, may be criticized but not controlled. It is more important that he continue to experiment, no matter how irresponsibly, than that he become disheartened and cynical through lack of interpretative outlet and of the opportunity to check himself by trial and error. Experiment is the life-blood of the theatre, just as of the other arts. But theatrical experiment is more costly, requires greater vision, broader confidence, than in the other arts. And the Theatre Guild, a native art theatre with an organized audience but without a native playwright, is O'Neill's logical laboratory.

The resources of this laboratory are convincingly tested by the simultaneous rehearsal and quickly successive production of two O'Neill plays. Members of the Guild's permanent acting company form the backbone of both casts, Alfred Lunt leading the one and Lynn Fontanne the other, without disturbing the position of "The Doctor's Dilemma" in the repertory. Lee Simonson is the viceroy of the board of directors as designer of "Marco Millions," with the young Russo-Armenian, Rouben Mamoulian, fresh from his rhythmic achievements in the Guild's "Porgy," as marshal of the pageant's multitudinous scenes and players; while Philip Moeller, for the board, exerts a powerful centrifugal force as viceroy and director of the nine sprawling acts of "Strange Interlude."

As an experiment in playwriting, the ironic epic of Venice's star traveling salesman pales into child's play beside the expansive, yet intensive, life story of Nina Leeds. O'Neill might have written "Marco Millions" with his left hand, although it must have required both hands and a score of blue pencils to cut it down from the interminable form in which I first read it. Compression is the soul of common sense in the case of "Marco." Originally intended to run two evenings, this exotic romance, tinged with wistful beauty and crossed with a sardonic satire on young Polo and his complacent heirs of today, has a scant evening's real substance. As cut, it reads now without boring, but it still leans heavily on producer, player, and designer. Fortunately, these anchorages are secure. Aristocratic, not garish, munificence is the key-note of the succor extended by the Guild to this lordly but somewhat enemic manuscript. The wealth of rhythmic variety, of skill in the handling of grouped players, of instinctive and racial sympathy with the Orient, on the part of the stage director; the versatile acting talents of Alfred Lunt and his associates, commonly attuned through prior common endeavors; and, most of all, the fecund and resourceful imagination of the stage designer. If Lee Simonson has leaped to more piercing beauty and vision in setting Werfel's "Goat Song," spurred by the exalted and ecstatic genius of that drama, neither he nor any other designer of our times of whom I know has achieved more suggestive and stimulating variety or more plastic, fluid and unbroken continuity within the unity of a permanent skeleton setting.

The experimental desiderata of "Strange Interlude" differ as widely as the intrinsic merits of the two plays. Here, instead of beguiling visual and tonal diversions, the need is for a watchful inpassivity on the part of the direction. In contrast to the tenuity of idea in "Marco Millions," this patient, tireless, ceaselessly inquisitive and richly illuminating chronicle of the love life of an erotic woman and of the four men—youthful ideal, husband, mature lover, and consoling friend—who are all necessary to her to complete the concept "man," tells itself. It needs only to be entrusted to intelligent, perceptive, and sympathetic hands and permitted to run its five hours' course. The amazing skill of Philip Moeller's direction consists in keeping obtrusive hands off Lynn Fontanne's subtle and sensitive portrait gallery of Nina Leeds in the manifold crises of her tortured life, as well as off the symphony of devoted males from whom she draws weirdly fascinating but inevitably discordant harmonies; while, at the same time, the eye of the regisseur, or rather his instinct, preserves the tense pace of it all in the face of O'Neill's revolutionary expedient of making his characters think out loud.

Extreme caution is necessary in judging "Strange Interlude." There are so many evidences of genuine greatness in the play alongside so many lapses in execution, and O'Neill calmly—and often successfully— flouts so many traditions which we had thought impregnable, that those who admire it will tend to grant it more than its just deserts, while those who are offended or merely irritated by that to which they are not complacently accustomed may reject it with as little discrimination. Unquestionably, it is a *tour de force* of sustained creation in the field of the spoken and visualized word. O'Neill has proved to me, at least, that the human attention (rather, the Occidental attention, for the Oriental is inured to the test) can be held absorbed in a theatre for five hours. I am not so sure, however, that the theme of "Strange Interlude" irrevocably requires such intensive-extensive treatment, that it could not be split up into several plays. In the theatre, if not on the printed page, O'Neill and the Guild manage to give an iron-clad unity and indivisibility to the performance. Whatever the long view and the ultimate verdict on the play may yield, whatever its reception may be at the hands of O'Neill's international audience, the writing and the production of "Strange Interlude" is a memorable moment in the history of our expanding theatre, proving that the vitality which dares the unknown and the difficult and the forbidden still runs strong in our esthetic blood.

(*Mr. Sayler will review next week the American Laboratory Theatre production, "The Bridal Veil," by Arthur Schnitzler*).

* * *

PLAYS OF THE SEASON

Still Running in New York

BURLESQUE. By *Arthur Hopkins* and *George Manker Watters*. Plymouth Theatre. The personal equation beneath pink tights and putty nose.

THE GOOD HOPE. By *Herman Heijermans*. Civic Repertory Theatre. A European repertory veteran ably revived on our only repertory stage.

PORGY. By *Dorothy* and *DuBose Heyward*. Republic Theatre. The rhythms of Negro life interpreted in pulsing drama.

ESCAPE. By *John Galsworthy*. Booth Theatre. Leslie Howard *et al.* in the dramatist's latest—and last—play.

THE IVORY DOOR. By *A. A. Milne*. Charles Hopkins Theatre. An ironic and whimsical fairy tale for grown-ups.

AND SO TO BED. By *J. B. Fagan*. Bijou Theatre. A satiric and pungent comedy based on a presumable day in the amorous life of Samuel Pepys, Esq.

THE DOCTOR'S DILEMMA. By *Bernard Shaw*. Guild Theatre. A debated and debating play set squarely on its feet at last by sound acting and discerning direction.

BEHOLD, THE BRIDEGROOM. By *George Kelly*. Cort Theatre. Dying for love explained by modern psychology.

A Great Library

LETTERS OF SIR THOMAS BODLEY TO THOMAS JAMES, First Keeper of the Bodleian Library. Edited by G. W. Wheeler. New York: Oxford University Press. 1927. $7.

Reviewed by Arthur W. Colton

THE typical medieval and renaissance founder or great donor was a royal, noble, or ecclesiastical millionaire. The present day foundation is more apt to come out of fortune newly acquired in business. The motives moving men then and now to this action, how circumstantially different and how often fundamentally alike, would be a curious study for some psycho-sociologist. Has any book been written on "Foundations, their Causes and Effects, Past, Present and Future"? I probably ought to know, and do not. It would seem to casual observation an enormously important phenomenon to all three tenses. The medieval donations were mainly to churches and monasteries; the modern are educational, or to hospitals, or increasingly now perhaps to scientific research.

Sir Thomas Bodley was not the usual modern type of wealthy donor. He was originally an Oxford don, learned in Greek and Hebrew. But at the age of thirty he left Oxford for the Continent in order to acquire French, Italian, and Spanish. Some years later, in 1585, he was given a diplomatic mission by Elizabeth. In 1587 he married a rich widow. From 1589 to 1596 he was the English representative in Holland, and then retired to take up the scheme of restoring Duke Humphrey's Library at Oxford, which had largely disappeared. He paid all the overhead expenses himself, but the books seem to have been in part, if not largely, gifts that poured in from all directions. He hunted donations assiduously and had a wide acquaintance.

He kept the general and rather particular oversight in his own hands, and these letters are written to his librarian at Oxford from 1600 to 1613, the year of Sir Thomas's death. He left nearly all his property to the Library and to Merton College, and left a number of relatives disgruntled on that account. Fundamentally it sounds quite modern, but circumstantially the differences are entertaining. Anything below a folio seems to have been, to his taste, a light and rather negligible matter. "Of your lesser books," he writes, "I know not and make doubt of their goodness." One of his early expenses was for chains for the security of these folios. He objected strongly to Mr. James's marriage, but had to yield. In general he preferred a Latin translation of an English work to the vernacular original.

"With 1,500,000 volumes," Mr. Wheeler remarks in his Introduction, "the Bodleian now takes rank as the greatest among university libraries." On the ground of numbers the claim might be questioned. On the ground of value—if value means rarity and difficulty of replacement—the claim could hardly be questioned at all. In that respect the greatest library in Europe is perhaps the Vatican, which is not large. But how far is that the meaning of "value"?

To judge from Sir Thomas's letters, his original 6,000 volumes must have been largely Greek, Latin, and Hebrew texts and commentaries; and still more works in Protestant controversial theology. Most of it must be of very little value indeed to any modern scholar. Sir Thomas excludes with emphasis practically all play books, much as a modern founder excludes current novels, and 6,000 volumes of the contemporary drama of his age would be of far more value today, either for scholarship or at auction prices, than Sir Thomas's 6,000 of superseded texts, obsolete commentary, and divinity happily forgotten. Nevertheless the claim of the Bodleian to be the greatest of university libraries, in general terms, is probably sound.

It was, moreover, the first modern public library in point of date, though there was one founded in Rome shortly after. Its first printed catalogue of 1605 was the first general catalogue of any European library. The pregnant idea of getting a copy donated of all books printed at the Stationers Company occurred first to Bodley. Although the foundation was not wholly his personal gift, it was wholly due to his activities. It was the chief interest of his later years: "It doth greatly surpass all my other worldly cares."

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The Bowling Green

Mlle. De Sombreuil. II.

PERHAPS, in my enjoyment of M. Bataille's "Causes Criminelles et Mondaines," I lay myself open to the old French mot "Avez-vous lu Baruch?" The story is that once Racine lent La Fontaine the Bible; La Fontaine fell upon the book of Baruch for the first time, was staggered by its power, and exclaimed "Quel était donc ce Baruch? c'était un bien beau génie!" And thereafter the cheerful fabulist went about asking his friends if they'd read Baruch. So the phrase became proverbial for anyone who discovers and ejaculates what is old familiar matter to the well informed. Perhaps all the young Macaulays know Bataille already, and I am only (in Baruch's own phrase) a scarecrow in a garden of cucumbers.

At any rate one has good company in one's admiration. In one of the annuals (1888) no less a person than Paul Bourget contributes a preface of homage to M. Bataille as a psychological reporter. M. Bourget says, and justly indeed, how valuable these case-reports are, not only to the philosopher and the moralizer, but to the novelist. "The crimes of an epoch," he says, "are a very important chapter in the history of the soul of that epoch." There is perhaps some typical literaryman's exaggeration in that remark; for probably the crimes of all epochs are much the same in essence, and fall into very simple classification.

The particular little Parisian Nights' Entertainment that I selected for you from M. Bataille's wealth is, of course, a trifling one. I had to choose one that would not too severely pain my colleagues: for the editors of a magazine are always more easily scandalized than its readers. And yet, slight as it is, what a novel one could make of it. Can't you imagine what an experienced opener of hearts, one who knew his demi-monde, could do with Mlle de Sombreuil? She is pure—I mean sheer—de Maupassant. One has to remind oneself continually that she is not just a character in fiction but a real person—might even be living to this day, though I admit it unlikely.

* * *

We left her on her way to Marseilles in a "voiture cellulaire," whatever that may be. Would they have sent her all the way by road, in a Black Maria? Yet the journey can hardly have been done by train, if it took eight days. Arrived at Marseilles she had to wait a week for a ship to Constantinople. Apparently she now had some freedom of circulation, for she went to a hotel. Evidently the hardships of the cellular vehicle had not impaired her capacity to charm. For staying in that hotel whom should she find, and subjugate, but another congressman—M. Guillot, deputy from the Isère. He, like a true Southerner, was not backward in chivalrous sympathy. I imagine them sitting in some brasserie of that lively town, and Mademoiselle telling her troubles. Give us a little tzigane music, chef d'orchestre, and the lively traffic of the Cannebière (Plût à Dieu that I see that street some day!) and I can imagine M. Guillot rising to the occasion. Of course, he says, the decree of elongation is all a mistake; there's some misunderstanding somewhere; besides, that old law of 1847 about expulsions applies only to political offenders. Certainly not, Mademoiselle, to anyone as charming as yourself . . . whose only errors, if I may say so, Mademoiselle, have been those generous ones you were divinely created to collaborate. . . . I can hear the deputy from the Isère saying these things, I see him twirl his moustache.

So Mademoiselle feels that she has found a friend again. And then, delightful coincidence, when she asks him about his colleague, the vanished M. Vergoin, it appears that gentleman is at this very moment conducting a case at law in Aix—only a few kilometers away. There is surely some misunderstanding that can be cleared up. Like a gallant man, M. Guillot himself escorts her to Aix. Evidently the Chamber is on vacation, and the deputies are off mending their fences. They find M. Vergoin in the court room, they sit listening to his speech. Does it startle M. Vergoin when he sees, so unexpectedly, the swan-plume hat in the audience? He had supposed his mistress well on her way to Circassia. We don't really know enough about M. Vergoin to hazard any opinions. Anyhow, according to Maitre Demange (Mademoiselle's attorney, you remember) the lady returned to Marseilles escorted now by both deputies.

* * *

It is a gay little nicety of human conduct: perhaps finding his colleague so enthusiastic reanimated the embers of M. Vergoin? The situation was now almost that of a Cluny farce: our heroine so closely attended by her two congressmen that neither would let the other out of his sight. A verbal process of their conversations would be a priceless document surely. As in the song of the men of Marseilles, the day of glory was arrived. Mademoiselle, squired by two members of Parliament, must have thought herself secure. But another pair of followers was also on the job. For the next evening, while the trio were dining merrily in a modish restaurant (I wish its name were given, I should love to hunt it out) enter two "agents." I see poor Mademoiselle turn pale as they approach the table. I see MM. Vergoin and Guillot halted with the wine cup half raised. At the moment, Mademoiselle's legal residence is Marseilles (pending her elongation to Circassia) and the trip to Aix was a contravention. She is under arrest.

Whatever may have been the jealousies of the two deputies, they are united against the common foe. They protest furiously, but the policemen are firm. M. Guillot particularly is outraged. If the lady is taken off to jail at this time of night, he says he will go too. He will protect her against indignity. He will have a cot put for himself in her cell. M. Vergoin, for his part, though it is two hours of the morning, gets the prefect of police out of bed and they telegraph to Paris. At last—after some dreary waiting, I expect—the reply comes from the Minister of the Interior. He authorizes the liberation of the prisoner on condition that M. Vergoin, on returning to Paris, will call on him and make a personal explanation of the affair.

Here the gallant M. Guillot disappears from the record. He goes back to his constituents in the Isère, I suppose. M. Vergoin resumes his burden like a white man. He returns to Paris—with Mlle. de Sombreuil; and on the morrow of their return, as M. Demange so charmingly puts it, the deputy and the young woman saw the sun rise together.

But for the last time. Was it the interview with the Minister of the Interior that frightened the deputy? Anyhow, again M. Vergoin disappeared from the presumably eastern-facing Hotel des Capucines. Mademoiselle, very unquiet in mind, was rash enough to set forth to look for him. Two agents grabbed her and hustled her off to the station. This time they would take no risk of her waiting for a ship at Marseilles. They handed her a ticket for Constantinople, and kept her under scrutiny until the train pulled out.

* * *

It's a long journey. I've even taken the trouble to look it up in my Livret-Chaix. Supposing that the trains in 1886 ran on much the same schedule as now, and supposing they put her on the Simplon-Orient express, she would leave the Gare de Lyons at 20.35 and get to Stamboul at 17.15 on the fourth day. The first stop the train would make is at Laroche-Migennes, at 10.43 p.m. Those tall poplar trees along the canal (it runs right by the station platform) would be rustling in the cool evening air; and I hope indeed that she had enough money in her purse to go to the buffet for a sandwich and one of those bottles of Sauterne with the cork already loosened. But what a journey for a hat with swan's plumes.

Yet if you think that Mademoiselle's boulevarding spirit was broken, how little you know her. She was merely recoiling for a strong saltation. It appears that she stayed in Constantinople only briefly—long enough to get the swan's plumes cleaned and to revisit old sentimental haunts along the Black Sea waterfront where the careless nursemaid went pramming. She had thoroughly grasped the theory of her decree of expulsion, and so, as soon as she had found a reliable gentleman who was going to Paris, she returned there with him. The identity of this client we do not know, but he also, like the earlier négociant, had bainsdemerist tastes. They had a little holiday, in the warm days of August, at Ostend. (I should have loved to see Mademoiselle in a bathing costume of the 1886 mode.) But then, coming back to town, she not unnaturally went to the Hotel des Capucines to get her luggage, which she had to leave behind when she was hurried off to the Golden Horn. There they refused to surrender her things until the bill was paid. The baggage had remained in the room—the room of the sunrise—all this time, two months. And the room, said the management, must be paid for.

Mademoiselle believed, says her attorney, that according to the custom of "gens du monde," M. Vergoin ought to pay. She wrote to him; he refused. Mademoiselle sent the lady of the hotel, Mme. Noël, to treat with him. M. Vergoin replied that he had already spent twelve or fifteen hundred francs on her, he was through. "Que voulez-vous messieurs?" adds the amusing M. Demange. "Avant d'être député, M. Vergoin a été magistrat en province—et dans le milieu austère où il a vécu, on ne se rend pas bien compte de l'étendue des sacrifices qu'il faut faire sur l'autel des divinités parisiennes." But now we can't help sympathizing with Mademoiselle's suspicion that M. Vergoin was acting double in some of these maneuvers, for again, as soon as she tried to get in touch with him the two famous agents reappear. She is arrested once more, and it is in these circumstances that we find her in court—"insolently powdered."

* * *

I don't feel that M. Vergoin comes out of it very well. There is a long letter from him, read into the testimony, in which he insists that all the public scandal of the affair has been worked up to discredit him politically. I am not concerned to analyze the problem too minutely; but I do feel that at least he should have paid the rent for the sunrise.

But the latest *ami*, the bainsdemerist of Ostend, was still loyal, and so Maitre Demange's final plea for his client seems to me reasonable enough. "Leave her in Paris, then," he says, "since she is not a dangerous woman, since she has not threatened Monsieur the deputy as was alleged. Leave her in this Paris she loves, since she is in the company of a friend, and you have made a habit of not bothering her when she has a protector. Be indulgent to her, gentlemen, for surely she has never been able to take seriously a decree of expulsion so capriciously exercised. And you, Parisians, you also can be reassured henceforward, for you will have the services of the two policemen who followed her about incessantly, and who can now go back to their jobs." This final merriment of M. Demange "soulève dans l'auditoire une explosion de rires inextinguibles."

The court, after a brief deliberation, sentenced Mademoiselle to a month in prison. M. Bataille adds that at the end of her imprisonment the decree of expulsion was again put into effect. This means, I suppose, that the protective impulse of the sea bather did not survive a thirty day anesthesia. She is living in Brussels at the moment, says Bataille—"but she has vowed to return to Paris, and she is a woman to keep her word."

* * *

Poor Mademoiselle! She may have been a tough and tiresome person; it is true that she seems to have had an incapacity to retain her admirers. It was with her, very likely, as with Mr. Don Marquis's mehitabel, being abducted so many times had spoiled her for a wife. But somehow, between the lines of the testimony, I seem to feel something that deserves respect. She never spoke for herself at the trial: when questioned by the judge she confided the whole matter to the eloquence of her lawyer. Perhaps, brooding the various griefs and escapades of her career, she felt incapable of doing justice to her inward light. As she looked round the court-room, on that dark November day, did she feel the Paris she loved slipping tragically away from her? Did she see a panorama of receding paramours—the aristocratic M. de Sombreuil, the defaulting banker, the worthy négociant, the congressmen, the bainsdemerist? I'm not a bit surprised that she threw the bread in the matron's face.

Brussels, of course, is as good a substitute as she could find. But you have guessed by now what she felt about Paris. Did she get back there? I hope and believe she did.

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY.

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Books of Special Interest

A Contrast in Poets

BALLADS OF THE SINGING BOWL. By MARJORIE ALLEN SEIFFERT. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1927. $2.

THE CLOSE CHAPLET. By LAURA RIDING (Gottschalk). London: Leonard & Virginia Woolf at the Hogarth Press. 1926.

Reviewed by WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT .

AMONG this reviewer's many and grievous sins of omission must be listed the dilatoriness of this review of the above volumes. Miss Riding's first volume of poems did not, it is true, come to his desk until last year, though its publication date is 1926. Mrs. Seiffert's—it is either her second or third volume—appeared last Spring. Mrs. Seiffert, hailing from the Twin Cities, is the more veteran poet. Miss Riding graduated several years ago from the *Fugitive* group in Nashville, Tennessee, whose members were constant contributors to a magazine of poetry founded by John Crowe Ransom. Just this season, Harcourt, Brace & Company has brought out a collection called "Fugitives," representative of the best work of the group which held together for four years and developed, beside Miss Riding, such poets as Donald Davidson, Allen Tate, and Merrill Moore.

No two women poets could be more different than Mrs. Seiffert and Miss Riding. They represent almost opposed tendencies, a sharp contrast in method. Mrs. Seiffert has her own peculiarities, hides deeper meanings between the lines of fantastic and *macabre* ballads. Miss Riding, on the other hand, is aloofly the intellectual. She is almost exasperatingly elliptical.

With Miss Riding we can go only a certain distance. Mrs. Seiffert we can almost completely understand. Yet both volumes are distinctly above the ordinary. The stamp of unusually interesting personality is upon both. Miss Riding is, in our own opinion, in the forefront of a movement whose destination seems to us an arid waste. The clear water of the oasis so evident to the vision of those traveling in that direction causes us merely to murmur "Mirage!" But it is always possible that this is the poetry of the future. We doubt it ourselves. We very much doubt it. We feel that these pilgrims are casting behind them almost everything that "poetry" means to us. They speak to us already in a strange tongue that has no power to move us. But they are in earnest and, evidently, they understand each other. And perhaps they are pioneers.

The work of Miss Riding has recently strongly influenced the work of an English poet, Robert Graves. (The title of her volume is taken from a poem by Graves.) Now Robert Graves started his career with verse built on such (to us) sound bases as the nursery-rhyme and the folk-story. Certainly, these are very far from being the best bases, but they are by no means to be despised. Graves commanded magic like a woodland wizard and had learned macaronic verse from John Skelton. He charmed us utterly. In his ejaculation, "Cry from the thicket, my heart's bird!" he stated the case for the preservation of one's own intensities amid a babel of tongues mouthing theory. But it seems to us that Theory has "got" him at last. It seems to us that it "got" Miss Riding a good while ago. Graves's later work has stripped itself of all the adornment so peculiar to himself. His former writing was clear and fresh and delightful. Now he is constantly in intellectual throes. Miss Riding is constantly in intellectual throes. She is capable of beautiful statement; but she is rarely capable of clear statement. Perhaps, as we have said, this is the poetry of the future:

Confusion brings confounding.
One sense too mutual
Is wisdom, then understanding.
Smile, death, O simultaneous mouth.
Be clear, identical brow, O death.
Cease, body and binding,
Alternate overtaking.

If it is, it is beyond our wits. We must leave it to the future. We can appreciate the cadences, but it is in a foreign tongue. Yet in the discourse concerning "Body's Head" there are statements we can both understand and appreciate. And lines such as "Two spirits walked the ruins, dazzled with death," "She smiled and was most periphrastical with no more rhetoric than one deep dimple," "The secrets of the mind convene splendidly,"

But, untranslatable in every tongue,
The knowledge of love remains
Cloudy in clear brains.

"Her banners dropped like birds that had never flown," "Titanic darkness, the untasted fruits of an intense Hesperides of night," "after the siren luminary day," have indubitable and peculiar beauty.

When we come to

Turn up the earth, uncover her tomb, turn up
Her Pentecostal cheek, immaculate
And slain with lilies

we are just over the border, away from an old Elizabethan excellence. But even this nearness is admirable. It is because Miss Riding sometimes reveals decided power over word and phrase that one loathes such nonsense as "His face dripped not like rain on his cravat,"

Ay, his old mother was a glad one
And his poor old father was a mad one,
The two begot this sad one

and sighs deeply over such an arid demonstration as "The Quids." The Gertrude Stein kind of thing sometimes intrudes intolerably; and this reviewer has never been able to see any justification for that lady's literary practises. Our conviction is, on the other hand, that Miss Riding is genuinely gifted, if she would not hack and disfigure forms of beauty just as her chisel is releasing them from the marble. There is a discipline she recks not of and needs badly to learn. This is the development of clarity and the establishment of communication with intelligent readers whose time is now spent in climbing barricades of complicated implication to arrive at doubtful meanings. "From mouths spring forth vocabularies," she says in one poem; and in much of her work one cannot see the wood for the trees, the concept for the vocabulary.

Mrs. Seiffert's, as we have said, is quite another case. We have spoken of the poetry of Graves. Mrs. Seiffert's odd and shivery stories told in brightly-colored verbal pictures remind one a little of Graves's earlier predilections. At times Mrs. Seiffert's technique is not quite as accomplished as one could wish, but her invention is always delightful, and the loosely-linked music of the ballad seems her proper domain. Her definition of the ballad is, evidently, broadly inclusive, somewhat too inclusive it seems to us. But what is important is her range of theme, her command of glamour, her ironic touches, and her delicate conjuring of horror. Among her best effects are the "Ballad of Rad and Beeling," "The Black Kitchen," "Ballad of the Well," "Ballad of the Cougar," and "Sailor Lars." The "Ballad of a Queen," also, dedicated to Dr. Breasted, keenly analyzes woman nature in the presentation of a Queen of barbaric Egypt. In Mrs. Seiffert's singing of the "Man-Made Woman," of "Judy and Julie," and of "Two that Feasted," feminine psychology is more deeply explored in a most individual way.

Mrs. Seiffert is in an ancient tradition. Miss Riding is engaged in formulating a new. Yet, peculiarly enough, there is more youth, freshness, and zest in "Ballads of the Singing Bowl," by far, than in "The Close Chaplet," just as there is distinctly more impact. Miss Riding disdains appeal to the senses, to the emotions; she would speak to the critical mind aloofly and with Protean subtlety. But her sibylline leaves flutter dryly and the Cryptic remains the worm in the bud. Poetry, it seems to us, needs a much richer equipment than this. Above everything it should seize us out of ourselves with immediacy.

Gerhart Hauptmann has accepted an invitation to become a member of the poetry section of the German Academy of Arts. This, considering the fact that Hauptmann emphatically disapproved the plan for the establishment of the poetry section is a complete reversal of attitude on his part. He admitted his change of face in the telegram which preceded his formal acceptance of the invitation: "Am very happy to have been changed from a Saul into a Paul."

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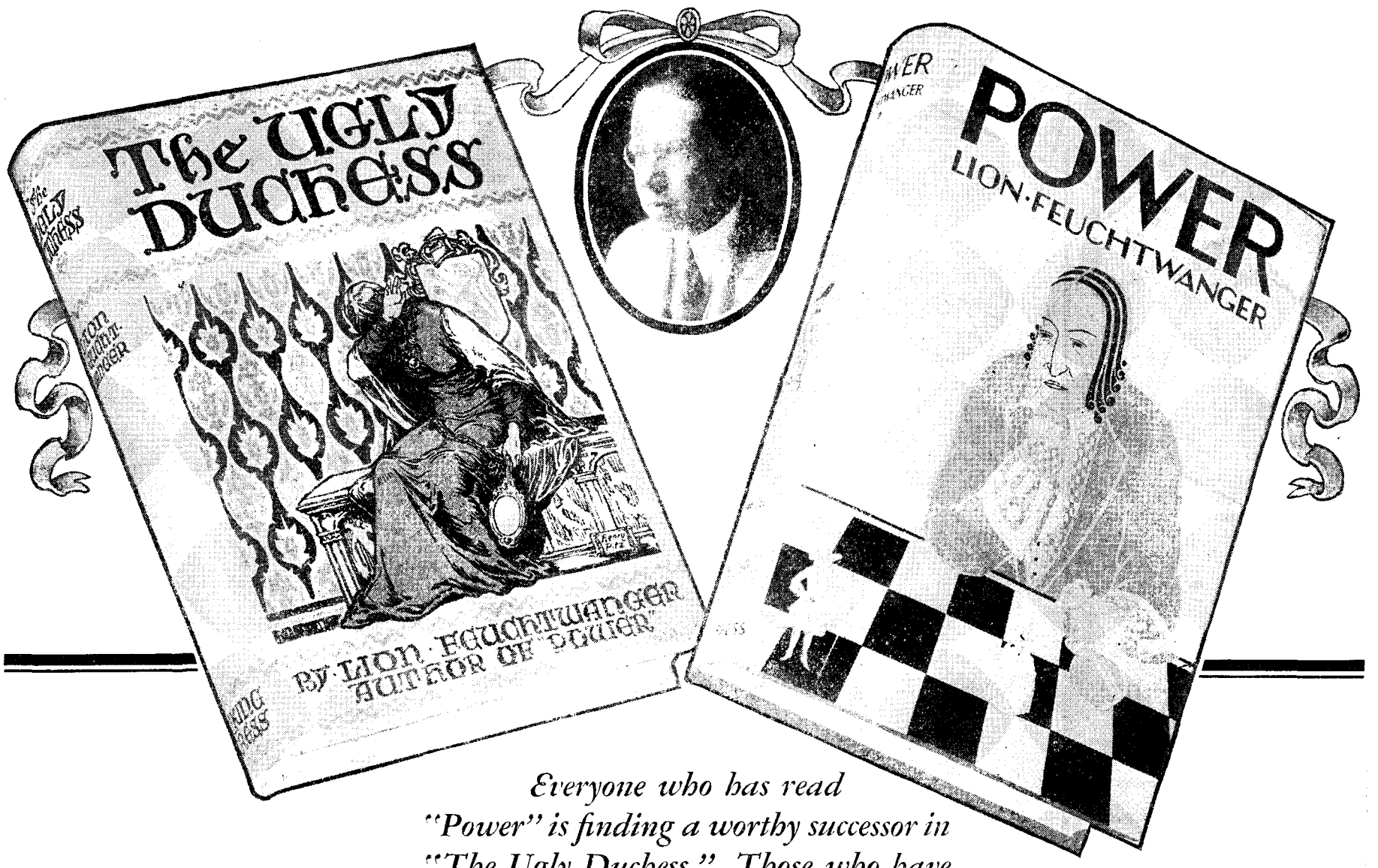

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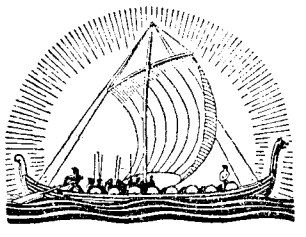

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Books of Special Interest

Farm Credits

THE FARMER'S CAMPAIGN FOR CREDIT. By CLARA ELIOT. New York: D. Appleton & Co. 1927.
THE FEDERATION INTERMEDIATE CREDIT SYSTEM. By CLAUDE L. BENNER. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1927.

Reviewed by MALCOLM MCCOMB

GOVERNMENT publications, industrial research councils, reports, and university monographs, appearing as they do in great profusion, are attempting to bring order into the welter of figures which modern statistical techniques have made available. Many of these works have to be dismissed as only adding to the burdensome chaos which the statistical agencies have brought about. Moreover the subject matter of a large contingent of them is so innocent of significance that it makes little difference whether they are written or not—though it would be perhaps better if the readers were spared.

Occasionally, however, a work appears which brings a vitality and understanding to a problem which, though important enough, has not elicited sufficient interest to make it academically fashionable. Thus two works appearing recently have undertaken a presentation of certain aspects of the available credit facilities for agriculture; a problem whose true significance is just being recognized.

"The Farmer's Campaign for Credit," though presenting a history of the demands which farmers have made for credit; is probably most interesting and most instructive in its thoughtful analysis of the manner in which farmers have availed themselves of the credit facilities recently brought within their reach. Credit has been the key consideration whenever the question of "capitalizing" farming has arisen. The lack of credit facilities has in a large measure prevented farming from keeping pace with industry. Moreover what credit facilities have been available have been so haphazardly organized and supervised that farmers have been largely at the mercy of their creditors. In this way, the country general store, the mortgage broker, and the small banker have held a whip hand over both the farm owner and his products.

When it became more and more evident that a healthy equilibrium throughout industry could only be maintained by a more healthy condition among the producers of the basic commodities, legislative programs and reforms were inaugurated to remedy the evils of the traditional scarcity and whimsicality of credit. This problem in its larger aspects occupied the National Industrial Conference Board and the result of their researches were embodied in "The Agricultural Problem in the United States." The thesis of the book is very frank. Industrialists will not get the most out of industry unless the conditions impairing the health of agriculture, the source of basic commodities, are removed. From this standpoint the agricultural problem and its solution is looming larger day by day, so that many observers believe it will occupy a prominent place in the political discussions and decisions of the next few years.

❧ ❧

As Miss Eliot points out, the problem of credit had been faced in Wilson's administration and the solution offered at that time has been the basis for further developments in this kind of reform. It is the author's opinion that credit facilities are now available to meet the needs of agriculture. There are however other factors, such as ignorance, habit, and the accustomed ways of "tending to business" which dangerously militate against the full use of these facilities. This book is but one more of those thoughtful treatments of the subject which are informing us that before any salient remedies become effective regarding increased production and the industrialization of agriculture, the agricultural population will have to become educated in what are to them foreign ways of acting—the procedures of modern business.

One of the great disadvantages which had obtained in agricultural credits was the lack of realization of the various credit necessities which various kinds of agricultural work demanded. For instance, while the produce farmer might expect two yields on his land a year, the orchard grower could not expect a return on his investment for a number of years. In the same way the cattle grower was dependent upon returns not sooner than within three years of his investment. A third type of needs arose from purchases of land and implements. Their actual cash value made even a longer kind of credit necessary. It was only at the time that the Wilsonian measures were adopted that a recognition of these distinct types of credit needs came about. These are known as short-term, intermediate, and mortgage, or long-term, credit. It is to a description of the facilities made available for intermediate credit that Claude L. Benner of the Institute of Economics addresses his work. Although this book is of a more specific nature, than Miss Eliot's, the author is in accord with her general conclusions. Once more it becomes evident that facilities have now been afforded to meet the normal demands of agriculture for intermediate credit. The descriptions of the various ways in which this need has been met, through the creation of a rather considerable number of different kinds of credit organizations—affords a striking illustration of not only how practical but how ingenious and still sober politicians can be in framing measures to meet practical situations once in a while. Bearing in mind with what antipathy the history of banking has been met by the rural population, this new labyrinth, well ordered as its nature is revealed to be, must seem even more mystifying to the farmer seeking a solution of his credit problems.

The World's Need

POLITICAL MYTHS AND ECONOMIC REALITIES. By FRANCIS DELAISI. New York: The Viking Press. 1927. $4.

Reviewed by R. G. TUGWELL
Columbia University

THIS book was evidently written in the cold passion which economists sometimes achieve. Only cold analysis could have supplied its argumentative precision; but only passion could have driven the analysis through to the truth. For M. Delaisi has taken the world for his materials and the world's need for peace as his problem. The result is admirable beyond description.

The century which preceded the great war was given over to a double activity of men. An economic machine was created which possessed enormous capacities. It actually did result in supporting with goods an unprecedented growth of population and at levels which were higher than any ever before known. But along with this reality there grew up a mythical structure of nationality into which statesmen attempted to force the industrial régime. The difficulty was always that statesmen were politicians, and consequently nationalists, and that they attempted to reverse the natural order of evolution. The industrial system possessed a dynamic, thrusting power which conformed to none of the statesmen's categories because it grew independently and because political forms had a place in men's minds but not in the operating world. Industry long ago began to overflow political boundaries and to create a world system of its own. But men persisted in clinging to the idea of nationality. The difficulty arose when, because they possessed the forms of power, statesmen attempted to turn industry to the uses of nationalism. What we call imperialism resulted. And imperialism was so impossible as a fact that eventually it came to the logical *impasse* when nothing else could happen but self-destruction. That was the war.

What worries M. Delaisi, just as it worries lots of the rest of us, is that, in spite of the obvious lessons the war seemed to teach, the statesmen forgot nothing and learned nothing, and that they proceed in ways precisely like the pre-war pattern to lead us straight into another logical *impasse*. And this will be war again. I am not able to convey, in a summary, the careful building up of the thesis or the convincing way in which the conclusion is driven home. I can only praise it and wish for M. Delaisi a million American readers. But these he will not, I am afraid, find. This is not because he is not an absorbing writer, but because we Americans learned less from the war than other people did. We, in a word, didn't get a belly-full. We are not in a temper to reconstruct. There are many signs that Europe did, and that the eventual peace of politics with industry will be made. The policy, even in Europe, is a temporizing one, as yet; the politicians have not quite capitulated. But they are compromising in important ways. It is very different with us. We have replaced Britain as the lending nation of the world; our exports grow; our calls upon the resources of backward regions expand. But we are devoted nationalists; and our political idea of economic control is based on the fallacy of a balance of competitive forces in an obviously coördinated system. We are able to sustain the political myth because we are so rich as not to miss its drain on our welfare; and because war has meant to most of us only a heroic gesture.

America is likely to cause more trouble in the world from her ignorance of the realities of industry, even though she exists in the midst of them, than is Europe whose leaders have been forced to look misery straight in the eye. M. Delaisi has done his bit to puncture the romantic notion that politicians can save the world.

Lectures on Religion

SPIRITUAL VALUES AND ETERNAL LIFE. By HARRY EMERSON FOSDICK (The Ingersoll Lecture, 1927). Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 1927. $1.
ENGLISH MODERNISM: ITS ORIGIN, METHODS, AIMS. By H. D. A. MAJOR. William Belden Noble Lectures, (1925-1926). The same. $2.50.
THE CREATOR SPIRIT. By CHARLES E. RAVEN. (William Belden Noble Lectures, 1926.) The same.

Reviewed by HENRY J. CADBURY

THE present year brought a well known American preacher to the most famous of American lectureships. In an hour's lecture on immortality Mr. Fosdick limited himself to a single phase of the subject, the permanence of spiritual values. He asserted his dissatisfaction with mechanistic materialism, in that it does not account for the undoubted fact of human ideals. He expressed the conviction that spiritual values are in quality eternal, and that therefore personality, which is the appreciator and creator of those values, must continue to exist, not merely beyond the death of the individual but beyond the ultimate destruction of mankind on the earth, which modern thought so vividly anticipates.

Principal Major is the most suitable exponent that could be found for an exposition on Modernism in the Church of England. His lectures constitute more than an exposition of a contemporary phase within a branch of Christendom. They are, of course, a personal confession of faith, thoughful, liberal, and typical of the mildly untraditional view of all church leaders who are not Fundamentalists. He defends modernism as essentially Christian in attitude, and as alone able to meet the demands made on the church by modern thinking men. Its enemy is not science, with which it may be reconciled, but a blind conservatism that refuses to adapt religion to the whole of our knowledge and experience. But Mr. Major continues to believe in Christ and the Church and finds place still for creeds and dogma. Heretical as he may seem to some readers (for example, in his chapter on miracles), he displays clearly the conservatism and ecclesiastical loyalty of the churchman. The book is marked by clear thinking and writing, by the use of striking quotations, and by a conciliatory spirit in the presentation of a liberal Christianity.

Canon Raven of Liverpool is also an English Modernist, but in his Noble lectures at Harvard, published together with a series of Hulsean lectures at Cambridge, he undertakes a more difficult task than the justification of modernism. This task is described in the subtitle as "a survey of Christian doctrine in the light of biology, psychology, and mysticism." His ambitious aim is the reconciliation of science, principally of the two sciences just mentioned, and religion. Few persons have to the same extent as Canon Raven familiarity at first hand in the fields here combined. A student and author in the subject of the history of doctrine, he is also a naturalist in his own right, and is beside thoroughly in touch with the latest psychology.

Beginning with the thesis that the reconciliation of creation and revelation is essential for Christianity and is traditionally justified by the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, Dr. Raven argues that modern science still permits a belief that nature is a revelation of God. Biology no longer confidently asserts a mechanistic universe with strongly materialistic and deterministic elements. In the inheritance of use characteristics and in emergent evolution the newer biology allows full scope for a purposive view of nature, for a personal God, and for human communion with him. The new psychology, though in some forms it seems fatally to challenge religion, by its emphasis on faith and on the subconscious capacities of the individual and of the group supplies analogies, if not proofs, for the religious mystic's interpretation of experience.

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The Wits' Weekly

Conducted by EDWARD DAVISON

Competition No. 18. A prize of fifteen dollars is offered for the best short lyric called "Going Down Hill in an Automobile." (Entries should reach *The Saturday Review* office, 25 West 45th Street, New York City, not later than the morning of February 20).

Competition No. 19. A prize of fifteen dollars is offered for the brightest glimpse of our own advertising columns as they might appear in an issue during the spring publishing season of A. D. 2428. Competitors may record this glimpse of the future in their own way(provided they limit themselves to 400 words) but we recommend a list of "choice items," each including the title of the book, the names of author and publisher, and a brief blurb. (Entries should reach *The Saturday Review* office not later than the morning of February 27).

Competitors are advised to read carefully the rules printed below.

THE FIFTEENTH COMPETITION

WON BY ARTHUR DAVISON FICKE

A penniless but gifted young man, graduating from a middle western college and determined to devote himself to poetry, invites the advice of his literary idol. A prize was offered for the most sensible, sympathetic reply from the idol.

THE PRIZEWINNING LETTER

DEAR N. . . . . .

It is a little hard to comply with your request and give you "sensible" advice on the subject. But I will try. Let me first ask you a series of questions.—

Are you willing to work for many years without the slightest recognition? Are you strong enough to turn your back on all the cliques and "schools" of the hour, and devote yourself to principles of poetic composition that have not changed since the days of David the Psalmist? Would you rather write poetry than have all the kingdoms of the earth laid at your feet?

Are you strong enough to bear the dislike of the mob? Are you individual enough to go your own way, no matter what prudent counsel advises an opposite course? Have you a real desire to explore the last depths of your emotions? Are you aware that those emotions are of no interest to anybody, except in so far as you give them beautiful and dignified expression?

Can you study endlessly the great masters of the past? Can you learn the lesson of their method—not merely of their manner—and borrow from them nothing except their power to express the passion of the individual heart? Can you refrain from copying them? Can you refrain from being "modern"?

Can you find some way of earning a decently liberal living, quite apart from your writing? Are you aware that poverty is a dark room, into which no sane man will voluntarily go? Do you know that the lovely fable of the poet's attic is a lie invented by rich people, and that lack of books and of diversion and of freedom is stunting to the soul? Are you prepared, I repeat, to earn a decent living quite apart from your poetry?

If you can honestly answer all these questions in the affirmative—then, I would say to you: "Go on! I wish you well! Maybe your great hopes will come true!"

Sincerely yours

This was a theme that came home to my own business and bosom. It evoked a rather surprising number of wise letters. Unfortunately some of the wisest were not well enough written to represent a man of letters. Dorothy Homans would have taken the prize if she had not exceeded the word limit by several hundred words. She was, if anything, a little too frank and intimate. One or two of her dicta may be quoted.

"Do not be too friendly or else you will be asked to join the Poetry Society and, if that happens, you automatically cease being a poet. A real poet hates the word 'society'. . . . . While a poet may be fickle, he is always serious, and a kiss is a fire. . . . Never marry. You will see too clearly what it is and if you are a poet, divorce is a noble act compared to sleeping with a woman you do not love. It would be hard upon her. . . . . If malted milk is your favorite drink and you hate absinthe, take the malted milk, but vice versa if you feel that way. If you do not want to be drunk all the time and have many mistresses, which is the conventional idea of a poet—and the world will expect it of you—don't. . . . . It is more important for a poet to know the secrets of the meadows than of the subways, for nature will teach him about human beings, but human beings will never teach him about nature."

This is admirable. As it is, Arthur Davison Ficke wins the prize for the second time in three weeks. The manner of his letter is perhaps a little too rhetorical and dramatic; but he recognizes the hard facts without sentimentalizing them and is at once sympathetic and discouraging. His alternative entry, written in the character of an elderly, established poet, was almost equally good. But I debarred it because I have never known a good poet who could bring himself to utter the word "technique" except in mockery.

It took several hours to disengage these and a dozen other outstanding letters from the pile in which they were buried. I relentlessly set aside all but one (W.A.F.'s) of the replies that referred to the muse as "a fickle miss" as well as a large number that were written in the high falutin' style of "If you are determined to enlist in the service of Euterpe and Erato, you will find these Gentle Maidens a solace when beset with reverses." No gifted young man with enough determination to devote himself to poetry would be likely to idolize anybody capable of that. It was equally difficult to be patient with the great man and "dear lad" type of replies.

"Frater Fra" wrote ironically from Minnesota recommending his admirer to "study man through Freud and learn nature from the art galleries." P. M. N.'s letter pleased me more because it held up Robert Southwell's attitude as an example rather than because it contained any valuable advice. There were some interesting points, usually isolated, in other letters. "Do your own rejecting," said Thum. Marvin Scriblerus insisted, not perhaps without truth, that "any unkind, dishonest, ungenerous act cannot but impair one's poetic faculties." C. D. McGurk believes that "the *desire* to write poetry indicates that you *can* write it" which is news too good to be true. Barbour A. Swain struck the right note with "keep your sense of humor; let others be the ones to call you a poet," but she probably forgot how little persuasion people seem to need nowadays. W. L. W. recommends the newspaper *colyum* as the best place for a beginning poet to break the ice of print. "There the standards are usually high, but the daily needs are large."

RULES

(Competitors failing to comply with rules will be disqualified.) 1. Envelopes should be addressed to "The Competitions Editor, *The Saturday Review of Literature*, 25 West 45th Street, New York City." The number of the competition (e.g., "Competition 1") must be written on the top left-hand corner. 2. ALL MSS. must be legible—typewritten if possible—and should bear the name or pseudonym of the author. Competitors may offer more than one entry. MSS. cannot be returned. 3. *The Saturday Review* reserves the right to print the whole or part of any entry.

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Vicente Blasco Ibanez

By HENRY ALBERT PHILLIPS

MY outstanding recollection of Vicente Blasco Ibáñez pictures him as a Man of Gestures. I say this with deep respect and after due reflection, for it seems to me, that each gesture was magnificent and inspired by a soaring and sweeping vision that this myopic world did not always share.

Anyone who has visited Mentone, the pinkest pearl in that jewel casket, the French Riviera, must have taken note of many signboards pointing the way to "Villa Fontana Rosa." Many may have taken the hint and gone to Villa Fontana Rosa, in the mistaken idea that it was an Inn, and had been told that this was not a public house, but the home of Ibáñez! One peers through the grilled gates, past the chauffeur washing the two expensive motor cars, through the glorious gardens and up the hillside at the seven uneven buildings, surrounded by lemon and orange groves, ancient Japanese stone lanterns and modern Valencian pergolas. They are not crude, but unfinished, as though the builder had begun to set up many schemes on a grand scale and had abandoned each in mid-career in the pursuit of a newer fancy. Thus twice, before you have ever seen the man you have had the character of Ibáñez revealed to you.

One of the seven out-buildings is Ibáñez's workshop. I recall being personally conducted round it by the author himself, passing by the walls of bookshelves holding more than 5,000 books in all languages, Shakespeare and Thackeray plainly visible; past trophies and souvenirs that breathed an odor of greatness, pausing now and again before one of the many photographs of notable groups wherein Ibáñez was sometimes invisible to the naked eye. The author would always assist by pointing to a figure and then stand back and raise his hand, palm upward and say with great simplicity: "Ibáñez!"

We Nordics dare not employ this gesture magnificent, as the impetuous and impulsive Latins do, to express the precious conceits that are always gnawing at the stony walls of our puritanic souls. So many of our authors prefer to leave it to the critics to strip their bodies from their souls, while they parade over the printed page in the nude, baring their sexual complexes in the vain idea that they are their souls. But they may be right at that. More Latin Ibanez ingenuousness and less Oriental Arlen ingeniousness would help the cause of English literature right now. What we need is more of that personal vision and outlook on the broader horizons of life and not so much of that universal peeping and looking in through forbidden knot-holes at questionable behavior in illicit chambers.

Thus in everything I saw and met in Villa Fontana Rosa I found the magnificent gesture and fancied I heard a voice "Ibáñez! Myself!" But it was always Ibáñez, perhaps with his solemnly amusing—or unconscious whimsy?—self, associated with something or somebody grander or nobler than himself and not meaner. The same broad outlook on a larger life is apparent in the later phases of his literary work.

When we sat down to chat, he was very, very solemn. He would remain perfectly immobile until he became really interested in what was being said, then he would burst into the center of the conversation, elbowing me completely out of the way. Nothing could then brook the flow of his words and ideas.

I imagine that he must have been like that when he wrote. He would first sit and study and think for a long, long while. Then suddenly his accumulated thoughts would take on form and energy and would come tumbling out with a passionate outburst and he would try to set them down. The moment he became thus galvanized in conversation, his hands would begin to gesticulate and his voice would rise in trembling passionate tones. All fire and eloquence. Then it was that you could feel in gusts the same thing he has so effectually put in his books—sweeping description, penetrating pathos, and staggering philosophy. A delightful mixture of the petted child of genius and fortune, racy raconteur, and savage savant. A personality so pronounced and ideas so valuable that he was wholesomely interesting at all times.

Ibáñez's whole literary life and career were a series of impulsive gestures inspired by great visions of epoch-making ambition.

Ibáñez was sixty-one years old when he died in Mentone. He was born at Valencia, Spain, in 1867. He studied law but discovered, and first exercised, his literary talent as a revolutionary propagandist. He was rewarded for these efforts by being put in jail. Released, he became an editor, founding the Republican newspaper, *El Pueblo*.

Ibáñez's first great vision, however, was revealed to him in his early twenties, when he had demonstrated, under the acid test of sales, that he could write fiction. He resolved to become a second Balzac and produce a Comédie Humaine of Spain such as the French novelist had written depicting the characters of France. His first stories, quite logically, were "Valencian Tales." One by one he took up other cities and provinces: "Sangre y Arena" (Blood and Sand) concerned itself with the bull ring of Seville; "La Horda" and "La Cabana," Madrid; and "La Catedral," Toledo.

But this great scheme faltered from time to time, as some newer and brighter light flashed across and blurred his vision. For example, in 1898 he was forced into exile for espousing the cause of the Cuban Revolutionists. During this exile in Italy he wrote a book called, "In the Land of Art," which demonstrated his ability as a journalist. From time to time in later years he gave many evidences of his powers of expression in this extra field. In 1920, for instance, he visited Mexico and wrote many articles that appeared in American newspapers. In 1926, "A Novelist's Tour of the World," appeared, giving his impressions of a recent tour of the world, but adding nothing to his fame. In 1901, had appeared a powerful tale of the early Punic Wars, which he said had too long stirred itself in his ever active mind.

Gradually the flame of the torch of the Comédie Humaine became so dimmed that he could no longer see the outlines of his once clearly defined vision. It flickered and went out.

The next gesture was his most brilliant. His inflammable vision had been relighted by the World War. Whether Ibáñez saw a millennium through winning the war that would free his Spain, or not, is uncertain and aside from the question. Who could and would set fire to the imaginations of the rest of the world which still hesitated about joining in the fight against Germany? Ibáñez!

All said and done, who can name a greater instrument of propaganda during the whole war period than "The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse"? It was a splendid effort; a magnificent gesture. It was a perfect combustible in America.

Alas! "The Four Horsemen" suffered the obloquy of mediocrity by becoming a long-lived best-seller. Our critics and our intelligentsia alternately preach and curse the reading proletariat for not recognizing a good book when it comes along. But even a "recommended" book may be too common and damned if too many people take it up. Ibáñez and his "Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse" was regarded with suspicion by the knowing. Good propaganda perhaps. But, really, how could so many persons be reading a book that was *really* good?

Ibáñez's literary reputation in certain circles suffered another damaging blow when the "Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse" was put in the movies and emerged one of the finest spectacles ever offered on the screen. Its propaganda value increased in leaps and bounds. If Ibáñez had envisioned himself alone with that other great vision of the Bible, "The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse," doing the work of a field army, he was not far wrong.

He turned to, and with the vision of a Conrad and the fervor of a France, he wrote another war book, "Mare Nostrum." Again his work leaped down into the golden pit of the best sellers. Again Rex Ingram, the motion picture director, made a masterpiece. Again the movie audiences of the world palpitated when "Blood and Sand" (written in 1908) came into print in America on the flood tide of Ibáñez's popularity. The picture-reading public got so they recognized Ibáñez's name linked together with Goldwyn-Ingram-Valentino.

It was about this time when Ibáñez's head was nearly turned by a vision of a crusade in the realm of the moving picture. He built one of the seven buildings on his estate, a small and fully equipped moving picture theater.

I am convinced that this new literary vision, which Ibáñez set forth to me with more or less detail, has never been given the prominence or been taken as seriously as it deserved. This time it was curiously the glorification of that old imperialistic and despotic Spain against which he was sowing revolutionary propaganda during all his leisure time.

"I am launching new books—a series of them," he told me, at the same time handing me a highly-tinted jacketed book bound in paper. "That is a real first edition of one of my works, which are first printed in Spanish for that is the language in which I write. Later they are done into French and then into English."

I read the title, "El Papa del Mar," which later appeared here as "The Popes of the Sea."

"It is a tremendous work that I am attempting. I am writing history in fiction form. The two will be so closely welded together that you may not see where one ends and the other begins. I hope to produce a new literary form and medium." He looked at me with brightened eyes that saw not me but his vision.

This work, or these works, will be of great interest to the United States, for it takes first and foremost and throughout into consideration the mother of America—the *real* mother, who is Spanish—through her period of travail before the child, America, was born and the events that led up to that birth.

"I begin with this book you have here, 'The Popes of the Sea,' which deals with the Spanish popes of the Great Schism. Next I shall take up the Borgias and call it 'The Feet of Venus.' 'The Riches of the Great Khan,' will be the title of the third book and concerns itself with Columbus. The fourth book of the series will be called 'Gold and Death,' depicting what followed the discovery of America in relation with Spain. The fifth is about the United States of America in particular and will be entitled, 'The Youth of the World.' That is as far as I have definitely planned to date."

What an ambitious scheme and splendid dream! "The Popes of the Sea" appeared. Then it sloughed off in "A Novelist's Tour of the World," which was followed by "The Mob," which was a far cry from the gesture magnificent.

Meanwhile running through his whole career, from his early youth to his deathbed, a splendid vision had appeared from time to time which he had espoused and for which he had suffered imprisonment and, finally, exile. Spain must be freed from the yoke of a despotic King and later a tyrant Dictator. Who would free her? Ibáñez!

From time to time he became a virulent propagandist and pamphleteer. In 1924 he published and sent broadcast his famous "Alfonso XIII Unmasked."

Ah, then at last, the greatest vision of them all! A book that would bring Peace to all the world—a romance about the League of Nations, "The Fifth Horseman of the Apocalypse." Ibáñez! Once again, Ibanez was about to make the most magnificent gesture of them all—when he died!

Fiction

CHECKMATE. By F. A. C. FORBES-LEITH. McBride. 1927. $3.50

Major Forbes-Leith knows whereof he speaks when he discourses upon Persia, for he has had much experience in that land, as British army officer, explorer, and overseer of an enormous estate The observations of weeks and months have their value—and of days also; but here we have the observations of a longer period. And the viewpoint is not that of professional traveler or poet but rather that of a man who has had time to weigh his impressions and furthermore has shared to some extent in life as it is lived by Persians on the Persian plateau.

The succinct account of Stalky's Dunsterforce including a pleasant encounter with Major Reza Khan and words anent the Anglo-Persian treaty sent me on with zest to succeeding chapters.

And now to the heart of this true tale—the description of a feudal estate of 500 square miles, in whose ninety-six villages live more than 30,000 men, women, and children. Amazing survival from the Middle Ages! On this estate stands a certain palace of the Lord surrounded by a twenty-five foot wall studded with bastions and broad enough for a carriage to drive along its crest. In this palace for the first months at Latgah, lived Mrs. Forbes-Leith and the Major who had become the estate's Lord Chief Justice, Collector of Taxes, Commander of Army, and Doctor, striving to dispense Justice, Honesty, and Healing against staggering odds.

Nimods, anglers (compleat and uncompleat) will sigh gustily as they read of the game and fish to be secured on the Cardar Akram's acres. But the thrills of these pages are not found in adventures with birds, beasts, and fishes, but in an expedition against famous brigands, intrigues of subtle headmen, the revolt they fostered, and an impossible real journey which ensued.

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The New Books

The books listed by title only in the classified list below are noted here as received. Many of them will be reviewed later.

Art

THE HISTORY OF AMERICAN PAINTING. By SAMUEL ISHAM, with five supplemental chapters by Royal Cortissoz. Macmillan. 1927. $12.50.

In engaging to extend Samuel Isham's classic book to date, the accomplished art critic of the *Herald-Tribune* undertook a task to tax even his extraordinary literary tact. For Isham's book was a peculiar one. Rejecting the mass of data usual in such histories, it was chiefly devoted to movements, yet the swift and almost incidental characterizations of single artists were just and felicitous. This general method is so faithfully and ably followed by Mr. Cortissoz that it would be a preternaturally acute reader who could tell where the continuation begins. Here is an admirable self-abnegating act to record, and in everything that is really a continuation of Isham the work is brilliantly successful. In accepting Isham's view that "a purely artistic concern," which he found very characteristic of American painting, is a concern for technique, the continuer may have been moved rather by piety for his predecessor than by personal conviction. However that be, the view itself has an old-fashioned simplicity and graciousness today. If it were true, how easy it would be to be an artist! One does not have to be a Modernist to share their view that a concern for technique is merely a concern for craftsmanship which, however essential, is the smaller part of art. Of course Isham, trained himself as a painter in the cult of the otherwise negligible *Morceau bien peint*, would never have admitted what is today pretty obvious, and his collaborator cannot fairly be criticized for refusing to change doctrinal horses when crossing another man's stream.

Where, ceasing to continue Isham, Mr. Cortissoz discusses Modernism on his own account, the treatment leaves much to be desired. Indeed the treatment is merely a summary sweeping away with a light twist of the stylistic broom. Your reviewer also holds the general position, that in Modernism we are dealing rather with an episode than with a revolution, but, even as an episode, and merely in the interest of historical record, a movement that for twenty years has enlisted many of our strongest talents deserves a probing with some more serious instrument than even the deftest broom.

FLEMISH ART: A Critical Survey. By ROGER E. FRY. Brentanos. 1927. $3.50.

At the time of the Flemish Loan Exhibition at the Royal Academy last spring, the National Art Collections Fund asked Mr. Fry to give a lecture on the pictures. This lecture, which had to be somewhat abridged for the platform, is now attractively printed in its complete form with twenty-two plates. Thus it forms both a record and an interpretation of the most remarkable pictures of a unique exhibition. Being committed to the doctrine that the chief and perhaps the only business of painting is plastic construction, Mr. Fry's attitude towards his theme is a shade gingerly. A critic who believed that there was no single business of painting but rather several quite legitimate businesses would in many cases have been more enthusiastic. However, Mr. Fry has the grace of holding firm convictions without sitting in the seat of the scornful, and his appraisal of the Flemish painters from the point of view of Modernist esthetic is both novel and instructive. It results in some amusing revaluations, notably in the promotion of the generally ignored Petrus Christus to nearly first class rank.

THE ART OF LANDSCAPE PAINTING IN WATER COLOR OIL AND PASTEL. By LEONARD RICHMOND. Pitman. 1927. $7.50.

This book chiefly differs from others of its sort in urging the student to search and grasp the compositional elements of his theme before beginning. This is obviously sound advice. For the rest of counsel is of breadth and simplicity, the point of view being that of the water colorist. It should be useful to the beginner if he is not too much deterred by the fact that his mentor's lay ins are almost always more attractive than the finished product. It is perhaps a defect that only the author's paintings are used in demonstration. Surely even the beginner should promptly make the acquaintance of great masterpieces. In short the outlook is rather that of the art class than of art.

ARTHUR WILLIAM HEINTZELMAN. Foreword and Critical Notes by JOHN TAYLOR ARMS. Minton, Balch. 1927. $2.50.

To the useful series of Modern American Etchers is added a complete list of Mr. Heintzelman's etchings with a selection of twelve well reproduced on a general scale. There are brief comments for each plate by the artist's fellow craftsman, John Taylor Arms. Mr. Heintzelman has the distinction among our younger etchers of being a figure designer. This album is excellently planned for the collector or uncovetous student.

THE SUBSTANCE OF ARCHITECTURE. By A. S. G. BUTLER.. Dial Press. 1927.

This is an unusual and valuable book for which one would wish a wider audience than it is likely to get; for it deals primarily with esthetics. Esthetics is a subject which seems strangely fitted to unhinge philosophers. Critics take it for granted; much bunk of modern criticism would disappear if esthetics were understood. This, then, is a debunking book. It debunks criticism, it debunks the science of esthetics itself. Yet it is essentially constructive, and it is written with grace and sincerity. It analyzes architecture into line and pattern, shows how beauty in architecture is merely pleasure of a high and distinguished sort at line and pattern, and pictures the minor elements of pleasure—pleasure in strength, in honesty, in expressiveness—that minister to the primary pattern-pleasure, and so go to make up the richness of the actual esthetic experience of looking at, feeling in, appreciating a building.

Biography

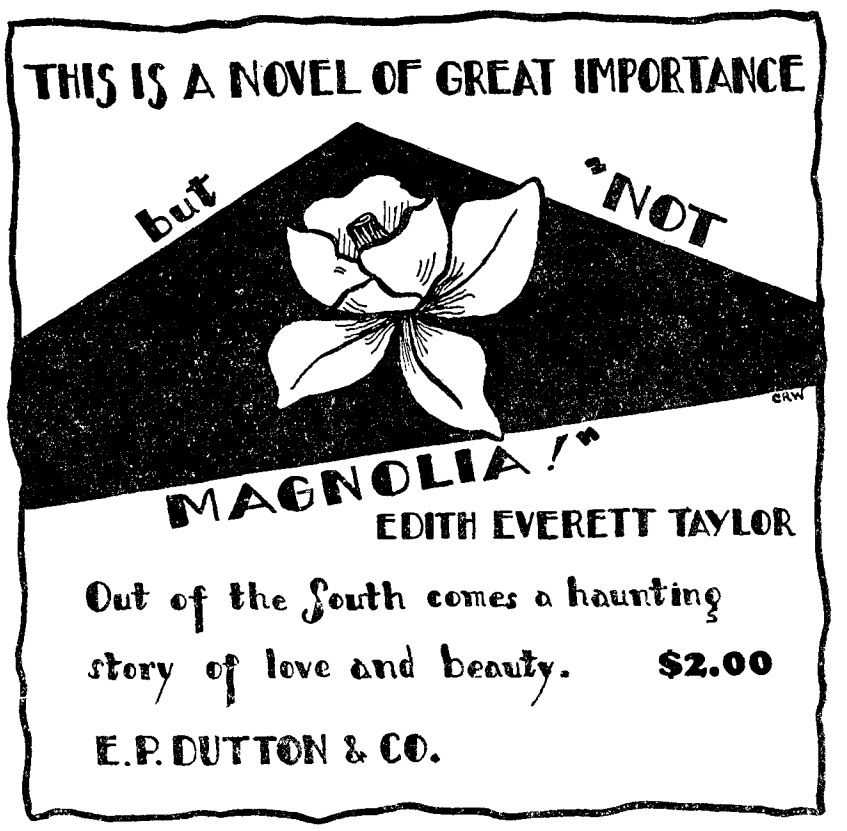
THE DICTIONARY OF NATIONAL BIOGRAPHY. Edited by H. W. C. DAVIS and J. R. H. WEAVER. Oxford University Press 1928. $7.

This latest volume of that indispensable work, the "Dictionary of National Biography," covers the years 1912-1921, and contains an index incorporating in one alphabetical series the entries for the years 1901-1912 and the period of this issue. The editors, confronted with the increasing difficulties of making their work inclusive, have cut down wherever possible the length of their notices. Since their volume has appeared after the death of the late editor of the series, Sir Sidney Lee and covers only years during which he was still living, they have prefaced the work with a memoir to him. All reference libraries will want this new addition to a necessary series upon their shelves.

AN AMERICAN LADY IN PARIS., 1828-1829. The Diary of Mrs. John Mayo. Edited by MARY MAYO CRENSHAW. Houghton Mifflin. 1927. $5.

The author of this entertaining but sketchy diary can be best identified as the mother of Mrs. Winfield Scott; a woman of New Jersey birth, who married into an aristocratic Virginia family, and was able to indulge a taste for foreign travel when few American ladies went abroad. She, her two daughters, and a Virginia son-in-law saw Paris in the placid, sunny days just preceding the revolution of 1830. Her social rank gave her the entrée into the most aristocratic circles. Lafayette invited her to the wedding of his granddaughter, and she visited him at La Grange, admiring its souvenirs of American history; she talked with Talleyrand, who was eager to show how much he remembered of the streets, the suburbs, and the life of New York city as he had lived in it in Federalist times; and she saw the "astonishing" Mme. De Genlis, who boasted of the fact that she could exercise fifty-two *métiers* or trades, and though eighty-two "rose from her chair with activity to show us her strength." The diary, which extends only to 140 pages, contains a variety of small gossip regarding such personages as Mademoiselle Mars, the aged Marshal Grouchy, and the Comte De Segur. Its personal passages are inferior in interest, however, to its general picture of the panorama of Parisian life. With an enthusiasm which sometimes becomes ecstasy, Mrs. Mayo depicts for us the gilded scene of the opening of the legislative chambers by King Charles; the Italian opera,

(*Continued on next page*)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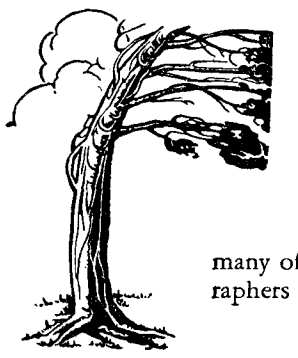

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PROPER STUDIES

by ALDOUS HUXLEY

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The New Books

Biography

(*Continued from preceding page*)

where Mme. Malibran aroused the audience to transports; the Théâtre Français, where Cooper's "Spy" was being played; and the balls, receptions, and dinners of the season. Her curiosity extended to the zoological garden, where she was amazed by the "cameleopard," and to the foundling asylum, where she pitied the scores of illegitimate babies. The diary is distinctly feminine in tone, and will amuse the general reader without affording any grains of real value to historical scholars. The Riverside Press has given it a beautiful format.

THE POINT OF VIEW. An Anthology from the Work of Paul Carus. Edited by *Catherine Cook*. Open Court.

History

HISTORICAL MEMOIRS OF NEW CALIFORNIA. By FRANCISCO PALOU. Translated into English from the Manuscript in the Archives of Mexico. Edited by Herbert Eugene Bolton. Berkeley: University Press. 4 vols. 1926. $16.

If there is anywhere a worker in American history more indefatigable than Professor Bolton, this reviewer does not know of him. He has personally made extensive investigations among the old manuscripts of various archives, both in the United States and in Mexico; organized classes and taught many students in Texas and California; founded an established school of Hispanic American history; and atop of all this, has found time to write, translate, and edit numerous books. In translating into English and editing the "Noticias de Neuva California" of the veteran Franciscan missionary, Francisco Palóu—"the first general history ever written of the founding of Alta California"—he has added considerably to the prime sources available for the study of our Pacific coast. There is room for congratulation also that "the publication of this work was made possible by Sidney M. Ehrman," for without a Maecenas, so high is the cost of the modern publishing of works of this character, it is doubtful whether this much needed historical work would have been published at all. Its publication marks the 150th anniversary of the founding of San Francisco.

The original manuscript left by Palóu has disappeared, but Professor Bolton wisely translated from a transcript made for him from the copy made in 1792 by Fray Francisco Garcia Figueroa, instead of from the Spanish "edited" printed edition of 1857, or the Doyle edition of 1874 made from the latter. However, he has indicated the variants of the edition of 1857 as compared with the manuscript. Preceding the translation of the "Noticias" is an excellent essay by Professor Bolton, entitled "Palóu and His Writings", and following the work is an appendix of the correspondence of Palóu with various officials and missionaries which adds greatly to Palóu's formal "Noticias." Editorial notes, with the exception of a few directly explaining the context, have been relegated to the back of each volume, in order to leave the "narrative as nearly as possible unhampered," but while this method seems to be gaining in favor in many quarters, the present reviewer prefers the old method of footnotes, as a mere matter of convenience. Any gain in appearance of the page is more than counterbalanced by the annoyance of turning to the back of the volume to consult a note. A good general index terminates the fourth volume.

The translation is smooth and clear, and apparently no liberties have been taken with the original. The work throughout is scholarly and most useful for the history of California. Palóu touched life at a great many angles and left an indelible impress on California, both as a possession of Spain and of the United States. The work should be interesting to the general reader as well as to the historical student.

THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF MEDIEVAL EAST ANGLIA. By DAVID C. DOUGLAS. Oxford University Press. 1927. $6.

THE EVOLUTION OF THE ENGLISH FARM. By M. E. SEEBOHM. Harvard University Press. 1927.

The scholarly monograph on East Anglia was inspired by the late Sir Paul Vinogradoff, one of the many fine scholars that Russia has given to the rest of the world. The author clearly resembles his master in interest, emphasis, and style. The purpose in making the investigation was to throw light on the social history of England by a detailed study of one of the parts over a short period—Norfolk and Suffolk from the eleventh to the thirteenth century. But out of it all has come very little that is new and imporant.

The chief institutions studied are the village, the manor, the territorial soke, the hundred, and the leet. The village as the unit of agricultural organization was the most important of all. In East Anglia the village and the manor did not coincide, as so commonly in England. The normal holding of the cultivator, the author finds to have been twelve and one-half acres. This holding he finds to have been made up of strips not scattered but grouped in one part of the village area.

Before reading this work, the student should master Maitland, Vinogradoff, Gray, and Stenton. Then the treatise will become significant. Because of the fact that it is made up largely of analyses of documents and assumes familiarity with the writers above mentioned, it is difficult reading. The difficulty is accentuated by the effort to generalize cautiously from vague and uncertain material. The value of the work lies not in the generalizations, however, but in the publication of eleventh century charters and their correlation with the earlier Domesday Book and the later manorial extents.

The second work here under review is in marked contrast with the first. It deals not with courts or manors but with the elements of rural life. It gives an intimate picture of tools, animals, fields, and barnyards, though the different parts are not integrated into agricultural systems.

Here is a book for the beginner. He will learn much about English agriculture from prehistoric times down to the present century. The author presents the story as one of no doubt or difficulty. Controversies and uncertainties are passed over. Some very questionable theories are accepted as facts, for example, that the exhaustion of the soil caused the break-down of the manor. Elementary as the work is, it is based upon a real intimacy with contemporary sources. Illustrations add to its value.

Juvenile

The Children's Bookshop will appear next week.

ALL ABOUT ANIMALS. By LILLIAN GASK. Crowell. 1927. $3.

Miss Gask has, in some 250 pages, compiled an interesting little encyclopedia of 200 animals which will give children the keenest enjoyment. They will make good use of the alphabetical arrangement to look up any strange name about which they may wish information, but they will also read along in one spot or another just for sheer interest in the material. Who could see a mention of a Tamandua or a Capybara or a Chinese Pangelin without going further to discover what it might be and to study its portrait! It will be found, too, that the descriptions are not dry classifications but are told in an interesting conversational style with a great many bits of historical or geographical anecdote. The photographs of course complete the value of the book, and they cannot be too highly praised.

SONGS FOR MICHAEL. By FRED. E. WEATHERLY. Illustrated by Pigeon Crowle. Longman's. 1928. $1.75.

According to this little book's subtitle, they are the work of a great-grandfather for his great-grandson. Verses and drawings rather follow Milne and Shepard. Some of the verses have been set to music, it is indicated. They are musical and pleasant and sometimes humorous. They are chiefly of the well-worn kind that grown-ups write to and concerning children. There is not much more to say.

THE GOLDEN BIRD. By KATHARINE GIBSON. Illustrated by EDWIN G. SOMMER. Macmillan. 1927. $2.50.

There are nine of the stories told by Miss Gibson in her story hours for children in the Cleveland Museum of Art. They are legends of Egypt and Greece, Persia, China and France.

RECITATIONS FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN. Compiled and edited by GRACE GAIGE. Appleton. 1927. $2.

To put it succinctly, from Kate Greenaway to Nathalia Crane these simple selections range, including many familiar household rhymes. To demonstrate the diversity of the compilation still further, here are Emerson's fable of the mountain and the squirrel, "The Cow," by Jane and Ann Taylor, Mary Howitt's famous "The Spider

SHOP TALK

They keep asking for a list of the books that would be desirable on a desert island. At the present moment we are inclined to run an advertisement, phrased something like this:

WANTED: To borrow, lease or buy for one week-end, one desert island, completely equipped with sand, rock, palm trees, food, a hut, and a hammock. Islands having books need not apply.

This curious request is caused by the fact that we have been talking shop on what was intended to be a week-end of rest and relaxation—you know, slam-the-desk, grab-a-bag-and-away-from-it-all. Of course three or four days a year is the longest anyone cares to stay away from books, but one vacation of that sort is all we ask. However, while there is a book to be seen, or a shop to visit it will not be possible, unless someone answers the ad.

The Connecticut trip was a huge success. Located only a few miles from Hartford, it was a simple matter to visit ***Mitchell's, Warfield's*** and ***Brown-Thompson's.*** An effort was made to reach Farmington and see ***Helen Scarth,*** but the hostess insisted on having a few minutes of the guest's time. ***Miss Scarth,*** by the way, is the young lady who holds book auctions on new books, a unique idea in book selling. Her card, showing a map of Farmington (cross marks the spot where the Book Shop is found) arrives at the office every once in a while. We must attend one of those auctions.

Warfield's is an old institution in Hartford. Located in a store on one of the shopping streets (No. 77 Asylum Street), it does a brisk book and stationery business, under the amiable guidance of ***Mr. G. F. Warfield*** supplemented by the energy of ***Mr. Witkower,*** his assistant. All of the new books are here. You can see them in the plate glass show-window and are at once tempted to go in and look them over.

Edwin Valentine Mitchell selected an old cottage-house at 27 Lewis Street for his establishment. ***Mr. Mitchell,*** who is a publisher as well as a bookseller, sells new and old books and prints. His annual trip to England always means that Hartford is about to possess a few more valuable items. He publishes ***Book Notes,*** a magazine which is of real interest to those who read books and read about them.

The ***Brown-Thompson*** department (in the store of the same name on Main Street) makes the Hartford book-service complete. The person who cannot be satisfied in one of these three places is hard to please. In all probability, if an item is not to be found in any of them, it's the sort of thing that is not ordinarily carried in stock. One thing is certain, if it is procurable, these real bookpeople will get it.

They are all members of the American Booksellers Association, an organization in which the good booksellers of the country are joined in order to make their places of business of more value to the communities in which they are located. The best service, real attention, advice when it is needed and wanted—all of these things may be had from the bookseller. He will keep you informed of forthcoming books, see that you have an opportunity to look over many different titles and discuss with you the merits of each, if you feel inclined to talk. He is far superior as a book-distributor to any scheme or plan ever devised. Without him, the public would soon have to buy its books from slot-machines.

Ellis Ames Sprague

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

American Booksellers Association

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and the Fly," poems by such poets of the past as Browning, Tennyson, Blake, Wordsworth, Longfellow, and Lowell, and by such modern poets as Frost, Masefield, W. H. Davies, Lizette Reese, Carl Sandburg, Louis Untermeyer, and others. Hilda Conkling, a younger child herself when she began writing poetry, is represented, and we are glad to find selections from Elizabeth Madox Roberts's one book of poems, "Under the Tree," as beautifully accurate a transcription of the thoughts of the dreamy child as we have had in recent years. Many verses by unknown or very little known writers are worthy of note. Occasionally some selection strikes us as rather over the head of the small auditor, but such instances are rare. In general this little book is well adapted to its audience and though some of the trifles may strike a grown-up as silly, there are enough prime ingredients in this mixture to justify it. There are some supposed raisins that turn out to be pebbles, on which we grit our teeth. "A Creed," by Edgar A. Guest, in the section entitled "Patriotic" is such a one. But fortunately this section is brief, and so is Mr. Guest's "poem." The section "Days We Celebrate" reminds us too strongly of certain awful class-room exercises. With these necessary exceptions taken, "Recitations for Younger Children" may be given a clean bill of health. It contains much that one can read to the smaller ones without the blush of shame for its banality, even when it is nursery rhyme.

SONGS FOR MICHAEL. By *Fred E. Weatherly*. Longmans, Green. $1.75.

CHILDREN'S THEATRES AND PLAYS. By *Constance D'Arcy Mackay*. Appleton. $3.50.

THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH. By *Padraic Colum*. Macmillan. $1.75.

Miscellaneous

CHINESE RECIPES. By NELLIE C. WONG. N. C. Wong, 1226 Amsterdam Avenue, New York City. 1928.

Those many habitués of Chinese restaurants who find delectable the dishes there served will find the recipes for some of them in this gay little orange bound booklet. Miss Wong has gathered together some of the dishes most likely to prove popular, dishes, moreover, which have the added advantage of presenting no difficulty in the way of obtaining the ingredients they contain. Her pamphlet should prove atractive to the housekeeper looking for food to serve that is out of the usual dietary.

THE HOUSEHOLD DICTIONARY. By WINIFRED S. FALES. Dodd, Mead. $1.50.

All women have had the experience of making mental notes on odds and ends of useful information tucked away into the women's pages of the daily papers or embedded in monthlies or household manuals and then finding themselves completely at a loss as to how to find again such instruction on the steaming of velvet, removing of grass stains, or cognate subjects. Miss Fales has gathered these data together into a volume which lists its items alphabetically, and supplies cross references where they are necessary. In addition to its concise instructions on household matters her book contains tables of standards, weights and measures, and directions for the treatment of accidents. It is a useful compendium.

MODES AND MANNERS OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY. By OSKAR FISCHEL and MAX VON BOEHN. Vol. Iv. Dutton. 1927. $5.

This latest volume of a fascinating commentary upon the taste and customs of society is like its predecessors composed of a pictorial representation of fashions with an accompanying narrative which supplies a background of history to illuminate its numerous handsome plates. The authors have derived their material from pictures and engravings of the period covered, 1790-1914, drawing upon fashion magazines, cartoons, paintings, and photographs; their text they have enlivened with quotation and allusion, and with a running explanation of the forces that influenced styles. Their volume is one which the serious student of history as well as the lover of human foibles and inconsistencies will rejoice to own.

MYSTERIES OF THE MISSING. By EDWARD H. SMITH. Dial. 1927. $3.50.

In writing this book Mr. Smith imposed on himself two handicaps. The first of these was in the selection of material: only famous disappearances were included. Unfortunately, those mysteries which attract the most attention are not always—nor, with such exceptions as the Charlie Ross affair, even usually—the most interesting. There have been, for instance, many disappearances far more puzzling, more fascinating, than either Ambrose Bierce's or Doctor André's. Bierce, no longer young, went to Mexico in 1913 for a final taste of war, either as correspondent or soldier, and was never heard of again. Doctor Andrée set out for the north pole in a balloon, in 1897, and was never heard of again. Well, "missing" by itself, is a word but feebly connotative of mystery in war and aviation: it is simply a hazard of the two trades.

The second of Mr. Smith's self-imposed handicaps is stated in his preface: "Neither have I attempted any technical exploration of the conduct and motives of vanishers and kidnappers. It must be sufficiently clear that a man unpursued who flees and hides is out of tune with his environment, ill adjusted, nervously unwell. Nor need we accent again the fact that all criminals, kidnappers included, are creatures of disease or defect." Granting that a vanisher may have been out of step with his environment, and that a kidnapper may have been a creature of disease or defect, one still wonders how it is possible to write intelligibly about them without investigating their conduct and motives. The answer seems to be that it isn't possible. Dorothy Arnold and Ambrose Small apparently were voluntary vanishers. Mr. Smith gives each a chapter, but he will have nothing to do with any exploration of their conduct and motives, and so the chapters come to nothing.

This same lack of inquisitiveness allows the kidnapping chapters—one apiece is given to Charlie Ross, John Conway, Marion Clarke, Eddie Cudahy, Willie Whitla, Willie McCormick, and Joe Varotta—to take on a common character, to become merged in the readers mind so that they can hardly be remembered apart. Superficially, kidnappings are pretty much all alike, or, at least, have many conspicuous features in common: the distinguishing features are usually, unfortunately for Mr. Smith, matters of conduct and motive.

Yet "Mysteries of the Missing" is an honest book: even when relating mysteries that are not mysteries it indulges in no sleight-of-hand, but sticks to the available facts and their accepted interpretations. A sprinkling of guesses would have made it a more exciting book.

Pamphlets

MR. JUSTICE HOLMES AND THE CONSTITUTION. By *Felix Frankfurter*. Dunster House Bookshop.

JAMES WARD. Oxford University Press. 35 cents.

THE SAGA AND THE MYTH OF SIR THOMAS MORE. By *R. W. Chambers*. Oxford University Press. 85 cents.

Philosophy

THE KINGDOM OF THE MIND. By *Jane E. Downey*. Macmillan. $2.

ETHICAL STUDIES. By *F. H. Bradley*. Second Edition. Oxford University Press. $5.

DIALECTIC. By *Mortimer J. Adler*. Harcourt, Brace. $3.50.

POSSIBILITY. By *Scott Buchanan*. Harcourt, Brace. $3.50.

Poetry

PICTURES. An Unpublished Poem of Walt Whitman. With an Introduction and Notes by EMORY HOLLOWAY. New York: The June House. 1927. $4.

The text of this poem with the comment upon it is reprinted, with slight changes, from the *Southwest Review*, where it originally appeared. This small volume, beautifully printed, is an item chiefly of interest to collectors and rare-bookmen.

WILLIE LAMBERTON. By ELIZABETH MANNING. Macmillan. 1927. $1.25.

This is a simple and lucid bucolic narrative, a story that would have interested both Tennyson and the late Thomas Hardy. It reconstructs one of the minor tragedies of the English countryside in a narrative verse that is flexible and moving. It achieves a quiet distinction. Elizabeth Manning's is a new name in contemporary poetry, but her sustaining of her story and her unassuming mastery of her medium are sure to be recognized. The manner fits the matter as glove fits hand. There is no extraordinary scintillation but emotion is stirred. A minor achievement of much merit.

WINGED VICTORY. By BENJAMIN R. C. LOW. New York: William Edwin Rudge. 1927.

A new example of the excellence of the Rudge printing and bookmaking, this slim volume leaves something to be desired as poetry. Mr. Low has done creditable things in verse heretofore. In "Winged Victory" he preserves a delicate touch and strikes out an occasional phrase and image of unusual beauty, but the major inception of each separate stanza, often reminiscent of Swinburne, sinks quickly into the minor and seems hobbled by the sudden full stop of the short ending line. Again, though Mr. Low can rise fierily high in his phraseology he can also indulge himself in twisted crudities of language. His flight is extremely uneven. Yet, to change the figure, there is ever and again the glitter of the true precious metal in this thin vein of ore.

KANAKA MOON. By CLIFFORD GESSLER. Dodd, Mead. 1927. $2.

The chief interest in this volume of poems lies in the locale that inspired them, Hawaii. Mr. Gessler is a resident of the islands. He is fairly accomplished. He familiarizes us through his verse with many aspects of Honolulu and its outposts. But beyond this there is little to comment upon in the book. Its descriptions are well enough, but no more.

THE POEMS AND LETTERS OF ANDREW MARVELL. Edited by H. M. MARGOLIOUTH. Oxford University Press. 1927. $11.50.

Here for the first time we have in two beautifully printed volumes a scholarly critical text of the Poems of Marvell, with elucidating commentary, and a volume of Letters printed chiefly from Marvell's autograph. Many of the letters have never appeared before. "Both Satires and Letters," remark the publishers, "are of first-rate importance for the historian as well as for the literary student and the biographer,"—a statement which cannot be gainsaid. Marvell was of Yorkshire, and we have in his poems a lovely presentation of the Yorkshire scene, in his letters an interesting description of seventeenth century Yorkshire affairs. Professor Margoliouth undertook this edition thirteen years ago. "It has been delayed," he states, "by many causes, of which the war was chief."

Marvell's "an Horatian Ode upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland," his "The Garden," "The Nymph Complaining for the Death of Her Faun," and "Bermudas" are favorites of all lovers of English verse. He was a poet who both tutored Cromwell's ward, William Dutton, and assisted Milton in the Latin secretaryship. He was a keen satirist of Charles the Second and the Stuarts. It is to be doubted whether others than historians will find of overmuch pith his letters to the Mayor and Corporation of Kingston-Upon-Hull, which occupy 236 pages in the second volume here presented, but such things as his remarks to Milton (in the Miscellaneous Letters) upon Milton's "Defensio Secunda" written in Latin, —as well as the general style of his private correspondence,—have much charm.

All students of Cromwellian literature will be impelled to possess these volumes. It is as a poet out of space and out of time that Marvell lives; but he was also busied in the affairs of his period and adds certain important footnotes to the events of a stirring epoch.

A PERSIAN ANTHOLOGY. Translated by EDWARD GRANVILLE BROWNE. Dutton. 1927. $1.90.

The late Professor E. G. Browne, of Cambridge, was probably the greatest Persian scholar of his time. These epical lyrical, mystical, moral, and narrative selections from Persian poetry are chosen from among his many translations. The small pocket volume bears also an introductory memoir on Browne by J. B. Atkins, and a note on Persian poetry by E. Denison Ross. It is in Dutton's "Wisdom of the East" series. The memoir introduces us to a delightful as well as a distinguished personality. The poems have been chosen to please the general reader and "to furnish examples of all the styles of Persian poetry." The volume may be heartily recommended as a postern gate into a rich Oriental domain.

THE SEARCH. By JIDDU KRISHNAMURTI. Boni & Liveright. 1927. $1.25.

A slim volume of poetry expounding the mysticism of the East in the words of one who came out of Southern India, from Adyar, to be exact, the center of Theosophy, to enlighten the Western World. This is a religious book by a savior of thought whom Mrs. Besant has sponsored. To the layman, untouched by Theosophy, the ejaculations are somewhat thin and prosy—this is preaching, not poetry—and the language in which the teaching is delivered is uninspired from the point of view of the poet.

Travel

ASIA MINOR IN RUINS. By SATURNINO XIMINEZ. Translated by Arthur Chambers. Bretano's. 1927.

Alas, love alone will not make a statué live, and Pygmalion's secret, we suspect, lay more in the skill of his hands than in the fervor of his prayers or the magic of his kiss. Were this not so, it is hardly possible that Asia Minor should have refused to stir under the painstaking pen of Mr. Ximenez. We know of his enthusiasm—when we read of it in the introduction; but the text itself is so clogged with miscellaneous learning, so wanting in selection, plan or proportion, that for a moment a humorous picture of

(*Continued on page 602*)

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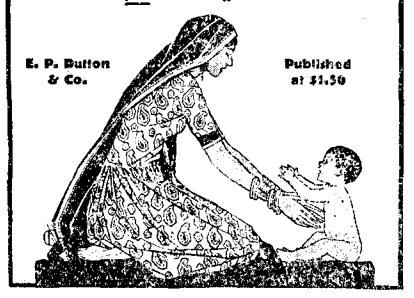

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Points of View

Concerning "Critiquins"

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review*:
SIR:

I have just seen the splendid essay "Behold the Critiquins," by Archibald MacLeish (by the way, who is he?) in the January 21st issue of *The Saturday Review of Literature*. There are some sentences and paragraphs in it that are really excellent criticism, some that are charming writing, and a few that are both. I must congratulate you on having obtained so intelligent—and in the few places where it sags in intelligence, it makes up in vigor—so intelligent an appraisal of the monsters who currently populate the literary scene. Sincere, however, as is my admiration for his paradoxically condescending defiance to what he calls gods, windmills, idiots, matadors, mannequins, "critiquins," and everything but book reviewers, I confess that I do not think I should normally come to this point of articulateness, were it not that it has been my privilege to arrest the erratic progress of several of his dornicks.

I hasten to lift myself now from the anonymity under which he notices me as "the person entrusted with the chic of the book column in a recent number of one of the most widely tabled of the couturier magazines." (My name and the exact rôle that makes me eligible for his attention will be found affixed to the bottom of this letter.)

Putting aside the undoubted zest of the writing, he has indeed for his major premise a point to make, not a very profound or important point but a fair enough point with which no one can disagree, which he belabors with winning indignation for some four thousand words, i. e., that most critics are brutes or fools or both at once. Who will deny that most contemporary critics are fools, that they shrill through their hats or adumbrate through their shoes without knowledge, tradition, or sense, who will deny the overwhelmingly obvious? Who, on the other hand, will bother to affirm it? The answer to the last is, of course: Mr. MacLeish.

And how he affirms it! Since critical method is a prime concern with him, it is relevant to point out that his method is as impressionistic, as bitterly personal, as vaguely generalizing as that of the worst of those he is scourging. But, after all, the critical method is reserved for works in art, and critics are a purely human phenomenon, and calling a fool a fool is the first and easiest phase in repartee. But it is when he makes the point that critics are brutes, again for the sake of the record belaboring the obvious but without any abatement of heroic scorn, that I, for the sake of the record, hasten to belabor it some more, to see where it will bring us. Such a rehearsal of axioms on my part would be generally insulting, were it not that Mr. MacLeish has blandly, boyishly, subtly (subtly in your eye) bewildered, ignored, and perverted them.

It is thus with something of Boy Scout self-righteousness and a little sorrow at having to dispel his trust in Santa Claus that I break the news to him that criticism is intrinsically and inevitably and by definition brutal, now and forever. Mr. MacLeish would have been just as unhappy in the time of Alexander Pope or Voltaire or Swift as he is today—nay, more unhappy. Most of the beautiful and naïve efforts that he defends so touchingly, with such a Venus-like gesture, would have been destroyed, rather, far more absolutely in any other day, not so hastily and flippantly, but with cruel courtesy, with terrible scrupulousness. A naïve sincerity of intention is not all that is necessary, unfortunately, to a work of art. Greenwich Village still pullulates with a thousand naïve sincerities. Nor, unfortunately, do most critics reflect as they read a very bad book, "This is this man's heart's blood, a precious and sacred thing." Mr. MacLeish assails the intrusion of personalities into criticism (although I do not remember more than three instances of it in all my reading of reviews); let him accept his own dictum—literary abuse of personalities is far less ignoble than special pleading for personalities; let him acknowledge that criticism is cold-blooded, impersonal, and the very devil on the creative artist. By word and implication he does not accept that and that is doubtless a flaw in his thinking and gives a falsifying accent to his comments. But Mr. MacLeish is a *very* sensitive man.

Now, when I had read through some four thousand words of rollicking abuse of as many sincere and hardworking fellows (though perhaps not so sincere and hard-working as Mr. MacLeish) I arrived at a definition of what I believe is the minor premise and conclusion of his syllogism, his self-justification, and his assumption of the barber's bowl of Quixote. (Although Mr. MacLeish in your paid columns diffuses my remarks to double-length by the device of indirect quotation, I imagine that I have not the same liberty. I therefore, with his unasked permission, quote directly.) He writes: "For its (Couturier Criticism's)"—what superb phrase-making is this!—"inevitable effect is to deprive all writing of value and put it at the level of the things a smart woman ought to know. And that destruction of value poisons the art itself at its springs. It corrupts the artist's mind. . . . No writer over twenty makes a book without having in his head as he does so a picture of the public it will have to face. He does not write *for* that public but neither does he write without it. . . . And courageous, selfless, devoted, though a man may be, the foreknowledge that whatever he writes will be passed under the tongues and forefingers of persons who will see in it no more than an occasion for their own cleverness, or an excuse for their intimate attentions to himself, cannot help but irritate and distort the all too present self-consciousness which is the sickness corrupting the work of my generation. . . ."

Whereupon I turned the page, passing out of these irascible gases and into Christopher Morley's appreciation of Thomas Hardy. At once my eye fell upon the following, in such curious juxtaposition to the above: "Someone is sure to reiterate the old legend that it was pique or deep indignation at fool criticisms that turned Hardy from the novel to poetry. That seems to me inconceivable. A man of his vitality and toughness writes as and how he pleases; and the sequence of a man's work obeys laws deeper than publicity." I think that for all time and for all purposes we may take this as the more reasonable approach to important men and important work. (As to unimportant men and unimportant work, let us see later.) But, of course, here we are away from the Battle of the Pygmies. Mr. MacLeish is defending pygmies against the assaults of pygmies. One wonders how much that defense is needed or appreciated by Thomas Mann, Robinson Jeffers, T. E. Lawrence, James Joyce, Wyndham Lewis; what Marcel Proust in his padded room would have thought about it.

⁂

All this impinges so closely upon the whole matter of art and genius, the function of the artist and the integrity of genius, that his omission of any definition of his position leaves one for a time in some bewilderment, but a bewilderment that proves to have been flattering to him. It grows painfully evident that he was impregnated at an early age with most of those notions usually dismissed as "arty"—that genius is always obscure, that the function of the artist is anything but to entertain, etc., etc., with a professional chumminess that leads him to speak of "us artists." He writes: "There is a group of persons writing to show The Literature Business is not an enemy but indeed the all and whole of their lives, the cause, means, and end of their writing." With one's own definition of the "Literature Business" this describes very neatly such writers as Katherine Mansfield, who was an artist first and a human being afterward, but it does indeed exclude such muscular spirits as Shakespeare, who were persons first and incidentally did their day's work as well as they could. But let us read the next sentence: "These are the novelists and poets who produce not novels and poems but public entertainment in paper and print as a producer produces a musical comedy—with very similar materials and usually with comparable rewards," and Shakespeare himself gets his ticket to the Literature Business, working as he did with the most banal of borrowed plots and getting the current market price for his commodity. I confess that I prefer the hacks of the Literature Business to the poseurs and bleeding hearts of Mr. MacLeish's Literature Profession.

Perhaps his special pleadings, like those of the men and women who argue against capital punishment without asking the murderers to abolish it first, are a little sentimental and misguided. Even so, he may plead for whom he wishes; but the absolute dimensions of his case certainly have not the importance he wishes to attach to them.

But let us pass that by and take up instead, for its own sake, his rather unimportant point of the present decline of criticism. In the first place, there are in America some very good critics, probably about as many and almost as good as at any other time. (I hasten to insert that I make not the remotest pretensions to being a critic at all—I am a book reviewer and I write parodies, too.)

In the second place, these critics become bad critics if they pay very much attention to the sensitiveness of the authors: their allegiance is to something as close as they can come to Absolute Truth. Of course, we book reviewers haven't the space or the liberty to salute Absolute Truth. It's unfortunate, but it's the fact: we can only *state* reactions as amusingly, briefly, and impressionistically as possible—that is our job, and if we are loyal to our convictions, however wrong and shallow they may be, our integrity is intact. We write labels, catchwords, that may be used by our various reading publics to simplify their choice of entertainments. When Mr. MacLeish proves ponderously that this is not criticism, he is wasting his time. Who could ever imaginably have said it was?

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Mr. MacLeish may indeed be an idealist, a pure spirit the unflinching truthfulness of whose perceptions corrodes him with bitterness, horror, and a passion for the clear light of a simpler day, but there are blind spots in his awareness of the literary horizons. Perhaps, like Katherine Mansfield's, his past has been so harrowing that he dare not look too closely upon it. Mr. MacLeish, it is charitable to say, is soft. Windmills he calls them, these atrocities against which he impotently rides. And windmills they are, that grind out his flour. The Literature Business: the writers, the publishers, the overhead, the booksellers, ten thousand published books a year, and who the hell is going to buy them? Does he believe that over 100 of these are worth reviewing seriously, applying his own absolute and eternal critical values? (100 is the highest estimate ever given.) Does he believe that the machinery of critical notice has maws big enough even to receive them all? Does he believe that publishers care whether they are gravely, conscientiously, severely criticized? (We are not discussing now a matter of art, we are discussing a matter of business.) This infinitely ramified machine is geared to accommodate business properties, publishing ventures like any other business ventures, upon which business men have gambled money. Writers, publishers and booksellers want, then, not criticism, they want advertising slogans. The critics may once have attempted to swallow this tide, as Thor the ocean through the horn of the Giants. It strangled them; they became, in turn, desperate, cynical, resigned. They have with some remnant of self-respect refused to admit that their profession is to invent advertising slogans, they have tried to retain at least the patter of criticism, but they have admitted to themselves quite frankly that their real function ceases with telling the customers the nature of a certain commodity. This is of course as far from criticism as the art of writing stock reports. In a last outraged convulsion of horror at their debased estate, therefore, some of the reviewers (as we shall call them henceforth) reached the last stage of cynicism and became flippant, arrogant, superficial, like post-war Grand Dukes despoiled of their titles, lands, and families, to whom remained only the privilege of being insulting. In a hierarchy where nothing is important, why not amuse themselves? Where there is nothing worth talking about, why not talk about themselves? And so the poor dear hurt brutes crawl off and smile though their hearts are breaking.

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The above dramatization of a business evolution is naturally considerably more romantic than the fact. But Mr. MacLeish brings the same callousness and superficiality and ignorance to the consideration of the Gethsemane of the reviewers that he accuses the reviewers of giving the Gethsemane-transfigured artists. He seems proud of his inability to accept the inevitable, as the reviewers have done. He reminds one of those unfortunates who put their right hand between the fourth and fifth buttons of their waistcoats and declaim that they are Napoleon. They are usually confined in the nearest sanitarium, with all possible pity but with some amusement. Such a confinement, however, would be too much

(*Continued on next page*)

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The Reader's Guide

Conducted by MAY LAMBERTON BECKER

Inquiries in regard to the selection of books and questions of like nature should be addressed to MRS. BECKER, c/o *The Saturday Review*.

"A MIDLANDER hopes that the inquirer collecting famous unwritten books for the decoration of false shelves masking a door in his Virginia Library will have room enough for different branches of literature. If so, he should include the Memorial undertaken by Mr. Dick in "David Copperfield," "which one feels was never carried to completion, hampered as the writer was by the head of Charles I. Perhaps the Journal or History from which the host in Huxley's 'Chrome Yellow' read that delightful chapter about the dwarfs, is too modern? Or the volume on rural England upon which 'Mr. Waddington of Wyck' was engaged?"

I hope not, for another reader has suggested the masterpiece of the heroine of Clemence Dane's novel "Legend" (Macmillan), a strange and subtle story of personality and survival. From another source comes a reminder that Olive Schreiner wrote and talked often enough of the *magnum opus* of which "Woman and Labor" was supposed to be a surviving fragment; but her husband, in his singularly frank biography, suggests that this great work was one of whose existence the author had persuaded herself without sufficient evidence. Another suggestion is a special editon of "Old Grouse in the Gun Room," by Mr. Hardcastle, a classic of surefire humor that will be recognized by the lovers of "She Stoops to Conquer." Another is the scientific work, "Speculations on the Theory of Tittlebats," by Samuel Pickwick, Esq., G. C. M. P. C. I have all my life wondered just what a tittlebat may be.

There seems, by the way, to be a general impression that the work in which Mr. Dick was hampered by King Charles's head was a History of England. No, he was writing "a Memorial about his own history," addressing "the Lord Chancellor, or the Lord Somebody or other—one of those people, at all events, who are paid to *be* memorialized—about his affairs." This was the impression even of the learned R. T. B., New York, who suggested for the "phantom library" "two books in that great novel of George Gissing's 'New Grub Street,' which surely ought to be included. One of them is 'Margaret Home,' by Edwin Reardon, that three decker over which the poor man shed so much blood. And don't forget in the same book 'Mr. Bailey, Grocer' by Harold Biffin, the poor drudge who used to talk so much about the decently ignoble, and who saved his manuscript from the flames by going up the chimney with it, as I remember.

"Wasn't there a story of civilization in Woodward's novel, 'Bunk,' and how about the manuscript in Anatole France's 'The Crime of Sylvestre Bonnard'? Do you suppose that's a real book? And there was a short story in *Harper's* recently, which won one of their prizes, about a man who was accredited with a book and received all sorts of acclaim for it, but never wrote it."

E. H. C., also asks for the name of the author of a book in her grandmother's library, "The Tower of London," published somewhere around 1820.

NOW lay down the fountain pen for which you have by this time reached, It is *not* Ainsworth's "Tower of London," which E. H. C. owns, and anyway, that came out in 1840. Also *A. C. C., Philadelphia, Pa.*, asks who wrote "Rhymes for My Children," by A Mother, published by S. Colman, 121 Washington Street, Boston, 1837, and "The Death of Tewfik Pasha: a Confession," published by Funk and Wagnalls in 1886.

G. *L., Grafton, W. Va.*, had trouble in finding the poems of "The Cheerful Cherub," a newspaper feature in book form. "The Cheerful Cherub" is by Rebecca McCann; a revised and enlarged edition is published by Pascal Covici, Chicago. *G. H. C., New York, is looking for a well-printed and altogether satisfactory set of Scott's novels.* I like the Oxford Scott, in twenty-four volumes, illustrated, with the author's original introductions; each volume has a list of the principal characters and a glossary. The price for the set is $36, not sold separately; the India paper edition costs more. Another beautiful edition is the Dryburgh, published by Macmillan in twenty-five volumes octavo, $2.25 each. The Houghton Mifflin Riverside Edition is another beauty, in twenty-five volumes at $2.50 each, $62.50 for the set; Houghton Mifflin also publishes a subscription edition in special binding. I just came upon a surprising account of "a pseudo-Waverley," in A. Hope Moncrieff's "Comedies of Error" (Black), one of those books about books so hard to classify that they should be told about by one book-lover to another. This book condenses and describes famous foreign novels, for the most part thrillers, in which the scene is England, such as the original "Trilby" of Charles Nodier, or the Italian version of "Pamela." The England here described is peculiarly precious to the resident of the British Isles for it belongs in no geography, having been chosen because it was faraway, unknown to the author, and adventurous. Did you know that Trilby was originally a spirit? He was, and a most ghostly one.

M. B., Plainfield, N. J., has had high success in giving Miles Nalleson's "Paddly Pools" with a group of children between eight and twelve, and is looking for a book of plays for young performers to add to Helen Louise Cohen's "Junior Play Book," in which this appeared.

I HAVE found the two volumes edited by Montrose Moses, "A Treasury of Plays for Children" and "Another Treasury of Plays for Children" (Little, Brown), an unusually wide and practical choice for this purpose. The age limit is greater than this group needs, but there are plenty of plays within their ages. There are two book-length lists that will be useful for anyone who has much to do with this type of entertainment. Alice Hazeltine's "Plays for Children" is an annotated index published by the American Library Association in book form; Kate Oglebay's "Plays for Children" (paper-covered), was prepared for the Drama League and published by Wilson.

THE copy of "Marching On," by James Boyd (Scribner), offered by this department for the best list of novels presenting the Spirit of America, has been won by Miss Mary-Dorothy Metz of the Library School of the Los Angeles Public Library; this school made my appeal the assignment for one of the classes in subject bibliography, and expects to compile a composite list from the titles handed in. So soon as ever I can, I will print Miss Metz's list "for a dispirited reader of things American," and if possible those of Miss Jean Gordon, Miss Frances Crosby, and Miss Jeannette Rideout, to whom I tender my sincere thanks.

E. H. C., Howard Beach, L. I., asks for advice on the choice and production of children's plays, and O. B. T., Jackson, Miss., for the name of a one-act play for amateur production by a club.

FOR the latest advice on every sort of play for young people, Constance D'Arcy Mackaye's "Children's Theatres and Plays" (Appleton) may be trustfully consulted. It presents information upon children's theatres here and abroad, upon church and outdoor productions, upon school plays and pageants and other entertainments, and includes some discussion of moving pictures for children. In the number of *The Landmark* for January, 1928, is an excellent article on the Children's Theatre in Endell Street, London, by Katherine V. Lyford. This magazine is the publication included in the moderate dues of the English-Speaking Union, it usually has something one should by no means miss. Speaking of entertainments for children, Grace Gaige, who compiled a useful book of recitations for boys and girls at the grammar school age, has just brought out a volume of "Recitations for Younger Children" (Appleton) that will come in handy on many an occasion.

Some time since, a club in Vancouver, B. C.,—whose letter I mislaid, so I trust they will accept this as an apology for delay—asked me for the name of a play as good as "Double Demon," one of the British Drama League Plays concerning which I had been so lyric in my praise that they had sent to England for it. This comedy takes place in a jury room and turns on the presence in this body of a married pair who cannot bring themselves to stand on the same side of any question. The efforts of the rest of the jury to get them shifted and not both at the same time, are none the less amusing for having a sound basis of human understanding. "Double Demon" and the play in the same volume, "St. Simeon Stylites," proved immensely successful in Vancouver production, and I pass on this information to the other club, but as they asked for an American play, I strongly recommend to both organizations "The Flattering Word," by George Kelly (Little, Brown), as sparkling and as sensible a one-act as ever I saw. It must be understood that this department, which does not profess to advise in matters of stage management or finance, cannot inform correspondents about royalties, but this play is stated on the jacket to be "suitable for production by amateurs," though it has been given many times on vaudeville stages. The flattering word in question, the sure-fire hit with any human being, is to tell him that he ought to be on the stage. In the meekest manner possible Mr. Kelly applies this treatment to a bald-headed, blond clergyman, a fat gum-chewer of fifteen, and her toothless mother, who admits that when she saw her child doing that piece of Longfellow's "Ring the Bells" and "I sat there watchin' her, goin' through her gestures and takin' her part off so good—I just began to realize what a fool I'd been to give it all up."

The monthly bulletin of Samuel French, the play publisher, will keep an amateur producer in touch with new publications.

Concerning "Critiquins"

(*Continued from preceding page*)

in the nature of an escape for Mr. MacLeish; I should rather suggest that he be made to become a book reviewer.

Though his periods run along in a smooth and persuasive way, his intellectual substratum is a honeycomb. Much as he pleased me on a first reading, I am afraid that a second reading betrays that half his values are corrupt with sentimental misapprehension, self-deceits, and false emphases, and the other half are non-existent. I find myself grievously disappointed in what had promised to solve for all time the chief debates of ethics and aesthetics and to join on my table the works of Sainte-Beuve, Ruskin, and Pater. Mr. MacLeish's articulations fail of that lofty ingenuousness, that noble integrity that I had thought at first to surprise in them. Mr. MacLeish may not improperly be suspected of having a past; as the Spanish say, "Resuella por la herida" ("He breathes through his wounds"). And the book-reviewing hirelings may rest their case by addressing to Mr. MacLeish another and no less shrewd epigram, one of Mr. Pope's:

"I am His Highness' dog from Kek;
Pray tell me, Sir, whose dog are you?"

Most sincerely and (for this opportunity) gratefully yours,

JOHN RIDDELL,
Reviewer of books for *Vanity Fair*.

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THERE has been a widespread feeling this winter that the current vogue of Press books has passed its crest, and due for a decline. On this account the prices at the January sale of Dr. Percival M. Barker's library were watched with especial interest. The books sold were practically all examples of good modern printing, widely representative of the work which has been setting the standard for the present century. The total $16,616.00 for 504 lots must represent a fair profit over the prices at which the volumes were issued. The increment, however, is largely accounted for by a comparatively few items. Dr. Barker had the sound judgement to secure the Ashendene Press books on vellum when possible, and was well rewarded. The "Morte Darthur" from this press, published in 1913, fetched the top price of the sale, $2,150. The Dante of 1909, a finer piece of bookmaking, and intrinsically more significant, but on paper, brought $510, while the vellum Apuleius of 1924 brought $400. Robert Bridges' Poems of 1914, on vellum, reached $225, and Spenser's "Faery Queen" on paper, $200. The other books from this Press held between $50 and $150, the Treatise on Fishing, and Spenser's Minor Poems reaching the higher figure.

There were only five Kelmscott Press books, hardly enough to justify any deductions. The Chaucer fetched $1,575; Morris's own poems by the way, on vellum, $190; his "Dream of John Ball," also on vellum, $160; and his Story of the Glittering Plain, with three original drawings by Walter Crane, $275. The Golden Legend, a topographical landmark, went over for $70.

The other high spots of the sale were $510 for the Doves Press Bible; and $310 for the leaf from the Gutenberg Bible with Bruce Rogers preliminaries.

There were just over a hundred Bruce Rogers items, probably too many to hold up the market, especially with many buyers in a doubtful mood. "The Centaur" dropped to $270, probably because the higher figures widely circulated lately have begun to bring out copies. "The Song of Roland," which does not seem to come out, reached $220. The three large volumes of Montaigne held up well at $140, the sweet little Chaucer Parliament of Foules went to $65, while the Grolier Club Dürer, "Of the Just Shaping of Letters," was a bargain at $82. "The Pierrot of the Minute," unequalled in its manipulation of type ornaments, likewise a Grolier Club publication, and the privately printed verses "Of Friendship," each brought $72. The Walton Angler at $60 was cheap; the Geofroy Tory at $55 held its own; while the "Mystery of Golf" at $42 was dear.

Henry C. Brooks's "Compendiosa Bibliografia di Edizioni Bodoniane," published by Luigi Gonnelli & Figli of Florence, enables students to understand, as never before, how Bodoni acquired, and how fully he deserved, his great fame. It is the record, unquestionably approximately complete, of the only printing establishment which leads the American Merrymount Press in length of service to the cause of fine book making. Bodoni had the advantage of conducting what was essentially a subsidized private press. The principal addition which Mr. Brooks makes to previous knowledge, is in showing that for most of his forty-five years, Bodoni turned out work enough, on definite commissions, to enable the press to pay its own way. This is just the information which is most difficult to get. It is doubtful if there are more presses than could be counted on one hand, which had to make both ends meet, in as many centuries, for which the historians of printing can discover how they did work enough to pay their bills.

There is only one thing Mr. Brooks does not tell, and this is after all nobody's business. It is, the present whereabouts of the amazing collection of Bodoni imprints that no one else ever heard of, to which he had access. Clearly they are still in private hands, and the possessor is quite justified in wishing to continue to enjoy his belongings without being pestered by people he does not know. There is cause enough for gratitude that he permitted Mr. Brooks to publish this record of what he has seen.

Richard Hadl issued his "Druckwerke des Giambattista Bodoni und der Parmenser Staatsdruckerei" (Leipzig, imprint 1926), just in season to show how extraordinarily fortunate Mr. Brooks was in the resources which made his great work possible. Herr Hadl makes substantial additions to the titles which appeared in de Lama's original Bodoni bibliography, but his five hundred titles makes a sorry showing besides the plethora of Mr. Brooks's crowded pages. The German work is worthily printed, and Bodoni collectors will find it a pleasant book to own, even though they are not likely to use it.

Edgar Allan Poe's "Fall of the House of Usher" is due to appear this winter as one of the "Editions Narcisse" issued from 2 rue Cardinale, Paris. The preface is from Arthur Symons, and there will be five illustrations by Alastair. His original designs will be placed in a special copy, on old Japan, which is offered for 7,000 francs, while the 300 ordinary copies are priced at 125 francs.

Francisco Beltran of Madrid offers for sale, *en bloc*, his collection of bibliographical works. The printed catalogue of the collection describes, in 397 pages, 3,432 works in 4,602 volumes. As nothing is said about the price, it is permissible to express a pious wish that some public spirited bibliophile might transfer the collection to the United States, to enrich one of the already strong bibliographical libraries, at the Grolier Club, the Wing Foundation in the Newberry Library at Chicago, or the Library of Congress. There would be a large duplication, of course, but the duplicates would be books that command a ready market, while the remainder would place the fortunate possessor beyond rivalry. The catalogue is most convincing evidence of the very active interest taken in bookish research in Spain and Portugal, and equally of the great difficulty every collector experiences in securing the privately printed pamphlets issued in other countries.

Those who have seen the monumental publication in which Ezra Pound's "Cantos i-vxi" appeared from the Three Mountains Press at Paris two years ago, will be interested in watching for the companion volume of Canto xvij-xxvij, which is being hand-set and machined at the Curwen Press. The publisher is John Rodker of 1 Farringdon Avenue, London E. C. 4. There will be ninety-four copies for sale, of which the four on real vellum may be had for 50 guineas each. Others may be had for 20, 10, or 5 guineas. The specimen initials by Gladys Hynes, shown in the announcement, leave one wondering what the shade of Robert Browning, who loved Italy and versified freely, may be thinking about these huge volumes.

There seems to be something about the otherwise-unknown (bookishly) New Jersey localities which develops originality in the trading in printed matter. Albert A. Bieber, who holds forth at "The Collector's Bookshop," from 86 to 90 Broad Street in Manasquan, in that commonwealth, announces that he has a collection of a thousand items of American printing dated from 1714 to 1800, which is offered as an entirety for $3,500. This proposition holds good for sixty days, after which the items will be sold separately, if not otherwise disposed of. Orders will be filed in the order of priority, and will be received and filed at once. A note on the collection calls attention to the fact that twelve years from now, the three hundredth anniversary of the introduction of printing into English America will be celebrated, and that by that time every library, public university or private, will wish that it possessed such books as are included in this lot. Some of the principal titles

The New Books

Travel

(*Continued from page 599*)

the author carried through Asia Minor, like another Pliny, in sedan chair and immersed in learned tomes, will not out of one's head. It is a pity that Mr. Ximinez should have traveled so far only to have kept his eye so frequently rather on his notes than on what lay before him.

How our picture of Ephesus as it appears to the modern traveler would have been enlivened, had we heard, not only of the marble blocks bearing Greek inscriptions embedded in the square pillars of the Roman aqueduct, but also of the innumerable storks, those sentinels of desolation, who from its ruined arches reiterate their interminable message against the crimson evening sky. We know of no country where the traveler is so oppressed by space as in Asia Minor, for it is not like the desert or polar regions, the emptiness of the uninhabitable, but the ruin of one of the most fertile regions of the earth through the dissensions of man. The most vivid pages are undoubtedly those which are devoted to the temple at Didyma.

The authorities quoted are not always the most up to date and the illustrations are frequently chosen from works which antedate the best modern processes of reproduction, but for him who knows how to do his own gleaning the book is not without usefulness. Asia Minor, however, still awaits the traveler who can make us know and see it, both in time and space, as for example, we see and know Northern Africa in that admirable book by C. F. and L. Grant "African Shores of the Mediterranean."

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are described in the catalogue which makes the announcement. Obviously, for such a price, no one will expect to receive any great rarities, but the titles given cover a wide range of interests, with a fair proportion of pieces dated before and during the Revolutionary War.

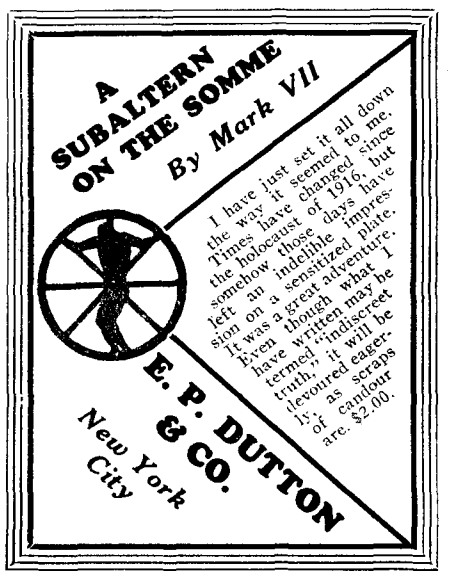
In Mexico the Ministry of Foreign Affairs issues Bibliographies of sixteenth century book stamps; in Italy it is the Ministry of Finance, "Provveditorato generale dello stato," which has undertaken "to afford new impulse to the printer's art" by issuing, in the Bodoni manner, 272 copies each of the Sonetti of Ugo Foscolo, and Machiavelli's Il Principe. Of these copies, fifty-one will be on Umbria paper, with bindings lined with art paper specially designed and painted by Ugo Zovetti. It is not altogether clear who is expected to buy these volumes now, for the circulars are being widely distributed. A century hence they will unquestionably be among the things regularly fought over in the auction rooms.

The prices at the Levy sale at the Anderson Galleries in January were characteristic of the way the market is going this winter. There were plenty of bargains for beginners, for those whose limit is $25 to $125—the 1662 Rump Poems at $355 Cleveland's Poems of 1669 at $15; the Adventures of a 1751 Lap Dog" at $20; "A Cup of Sack" gathered in 1644 for $95; Daniel's "Civil Wars" of 1609 at $100; Dryden's "Amboyna of 1679 for $25; and his "Assignation in Nunnery" for $10. Erasmus in "Praise of Folie," 1549, for $380, is even more of a find, as was the 1586 Galen at $180, Chapman's Homer at $450, or Coryat's "Crudities" at $385. On the other hand, there was no lack of competitors for the pieces that must be taken when opportunity offers. Marlowe's "Jew of Malta" went to $7600; Painter's "Palace of Pleasure" to $8400; and a nice copy of the "Sentimental Journey" to $1575. The first "School for Scandal" brought $550, a fair Gulliver fetched $570, the "Deserted Village" $360, and "She Stoops to Conquer" $410.

Those who are sitting alongside the steady stream of newly-made bookish rarities, speculating on which ones are worth netting as they pass, should watch for one which is likely to slip by unnoticed. It looks very much like the others which one can safely hope to catch later, and cheaper, with its 575 copies on special paper, with deckle edge, from the Fortune Press of London. Even the title, "Covent Garden Drollery" sounds a bit too enticing to be genuine. But this "Collection of all the Choice Songs, Poems, Prologues, and Epilogues, Sung and Spoken at Courts and Theatres, never in print before" (they were collected by A. B. in 1672), is one of the titles that Dryden and Nell Gwynn collectors, as well as those who go after theatrical or literary material in general, long ago gave up hoping for. The chances are that the reprint edited by Rev. Montague Summers will not stay on the market long, or get back to it often. After the libraries that know enough to buy it promptly, have taken their quota, there should be a few less than enough to go round among those who, for one reason or another, like to own a book of this sort.

In the December issue of *More Books*, the distinctive, and stupid, name given by the Boston Public Library to its quarterly Bulletin, the Assistant Librarian, Mr. Frank H. Chase, has an interesting account of Thomas Pennant Barton. The extraordinary thing about Mr. Barton is that, alone among American collectors of his time, he anticipated the favorite lines in which his successors of half a century later have specialized. His library of early English drama and Shakespeariana still holds its own in comparison with all ordinary rivals. It was purchased for the Boston Library in 1873 for $34,000, although the appraised value at the time was $50,000.

From the London *Times Literary Supplement* comes the following notice: "Messrs. Emery Walker are issuing the English edition of the Cranach Press production of 'The Eclogues of Vergil,' with woodcuts by Aristide Maillol. The work has been in preparation for many years at the press set up by Count Harry Kessler at Weimar, the aim having been to issue an edition which should prove a landmark in German book production. Three editions of the Latin text have been printed, the first with a German translation in hexameters by Rudolf Alexander Schröder; the second with a French prose translation by Marc Lafargue; the third—now coming from Emery Walker—with a prose translation into English by J. H. Mason.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GENERAL

THE BOOKSELLER & PRINT DEALERS' Weekly January Extra Number contains an article by J. W. Young on William Gilmore Simms and a survey of the reviews of Dr. Peck's work on Shelley, together with 2,500 items of Books, Prints, Autographs and Stamps Wanted and For Sale. The February Extra Numbers will be devoted to Special Bargains offered at Sale together with recent Auction Records and the usual features. Subscription $3.50 per annum. Six Months, $2. Bookseller Office, 233-239 West 42nd Street, New York City.

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SCHEDULE OF RATES for this section is as follows; For 20 or more consecutive insertions of an advertisement of any size, 5 cents a word. For a less number of insertions the rate is 7 cents a word. Copy must be in our office 10 days before publication date—or the second preceding Thursday. For information write Dept. V. O., 25 West 45th Street, Room 807, New York.

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THE PHOENIX NEST

OUR most valued literary adviser has apprised us of the fact that a recent book of ten short stories, namely, "Rhapsody," by *Dorothy Edwards*, published by Knopf, is an artful and appealing collection. We pass the information on to you as the opinion of an expert. . . .

The versatile *Clement Wood* has now written a Ku Klux Klan-detective story which Dutton will publish next month. It is called "The Shadow from the Bogue," and the unraveler of its mysteries is one Judd, a naturalist-reporter-detective. Darn few of the best detectives in fiction are merely detectives nowadays. They have other strings to their bows. . . .

We call attention to an interesting series of chapbooks brought out by the University of Washington and edited by *Glenn Hughes* of the English Department of that institution. These little books are excellently printed, sell for only 65 cents, and show discrimination and taste in the selection of material, which is by no means the familiar matter reprinted of the usual pamphlet series. We note *Richard Aldington's* "D. H. Lawrence," "Three Women Poets of Japan: A Book of Translations," "The Journal of Kenko," by *Herbert H. Gowen*, "Sinclair Lewis: Our Own Diogenes," by that excellent American scholar, *Vernon Louis Parrington*, and "The Haunted Biographer," by *Gamaliel Bradford*. Twelve titles have already been issued. . . .

The recent sad death of *Marguerite Wilkinson* is a loss to American poetry. Mrs. Wilkinson might almost be classed with *Harriet Monroe* for her vital interest in all contemporary verse. She contributed herself to modern poetry a number of noble and intelligent utterances. Her zest for life persisted and seemed to be enriched by a growing strong strain of Christian mysticism. She was a valiant and a generous participant in the tournament of song. She had a fine and forthgiving nature. All who knew her will miss her from the lists, for her heart was always high and her guidon flying. . . .

In January, at the age of seventy-eight, *Dr. Talcott Williams* died. He was Director Emeritus of the School of Journalism of Columbia University. He had had a long and honorable career. He is said, despite his many other achievements, always to have regarded himself as a journalist first and foremost. At the entrance lobby to the School of Journalism his bust stands in bronze. To students and graduates Dr. Williams was an unusually human and personal influence. He was a great teacher of journalism with a high regard for the best academic standards. . . .

The literary world has also lost the at one time dominating figure of *Vicente Blasco Ibanez*. Ibanez wrote many novels and always had an interesting story to tell. His backgrounds were new to us and acquainted us with another world. He indulged in eloquent controversy against the dictator of Spain and strove ever, and through imprisonment and exile, for political freedom. He was a sturdy political fighter fully as much as a vigorous thesis novelist. . . .

The Bookshop of *Harry Stone* at 24 East 58th Street lists an item that has a peculiar interest for us. This is "Westwind Songs," by *Arthur Upson*, printed at Minneapolis in 1902. It is a first edition selling at three dollars and a half. Upson was a young Minnesota poet first brought to our attention years ago by *Sinclair Lewis*, then himself an unknown. Upson wrote, among his most lovely verse, "Octaves in an Oxford Garden." His finest single lyric begins, "Out of the conquered past, unravishable beauty," and is one of the most perfect ever written in this country. Life and circumstance preyed upon him until he finally committed suicide by drowning. But he left a few poems of considerable distinction, and his work is well worth preserving. . . .

A letter from *Sam J. Banks* acquaints us with the fact that he is the Poet of the Circus. The first edition of his "The Tent Speaks" (Boston: Alfred Bartlett), is now exhausted with the exception of the one hundred and fifty inscribed, autographed copies in the author's possession. These copies are all ready for the first one hundred and fifty persons who may apply for them—sending money orders to Mr. Banks's Amityville, Long Island, address,—59 County Line Road. When the second edition of "The Tent Speaks" appears the book will probably be enlarged by the addition of a narrative poem of the circus about the length of Masefield's "Dauber." Mr. Banks has long been a part of the circus world, to say nothing of the theatrical, newspaper, and advertising business. . . .

Fifty thousand dollars (and royalties) have been paid for British and American rights in *Margot Asquith's* first novel, "Octavia," to be published by Stokes on April 26th. . . .

William Morrow & Company now have new offices at 386 Fourth Avenue, telephone Madison Square 3232. . . .

Edwin Markham is giving a course on "Poetry Appreciation," before a class at the Evening and Extension Division of Hunter College, meeting Tuesday evenings. The course began on February 7. The class is from 7:00 to 8:40 P. M. Further information regarding this course may be obtained from *Professor A. Broderick Cohen*, Director of the Evening and Extension Division. What is probably the first college course in dramatic criticism by a New York critic is being offered at Hunter College. It began on February 6th, and continues on Mondays and Wednesdays, 7 to 8:15 P. M. *Joseph T. Shipley* is the lecturer. He is also giving a course at City College on Tuesdays and Fridays, 4 to 5:30 P. M., Grand Central Palace, on the principles and practise of literary criticism. Furthermore, *Ralph Cheyney*, editor of *Contemporary Verse*, etc., is, at the Community Church Auditorium, Park Avenue and 34th Street, delivering a course of lectures which began on February 7th at 8 P. M., on "The Poetry Workshop: Verse Technique and Practise." . . .

And so away! THE PHŒNICIAN.

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